Reader's Digest

The Optimism Issue

Cheer Up!

17 Reasons It's a Great Time to Be Alive

* Michael J. Fox on Heart
* Anna Quindlen on Happiness
* Fareed Zakaria on Hope

DRAMA IN REAL LIFE

Miracle Baby of Buffalo Creek

HEALTH SHOCKER

The "Bad" Food Your Body Needs

America's Most Interesting Town

PAGE 18

January 2013 $3.99

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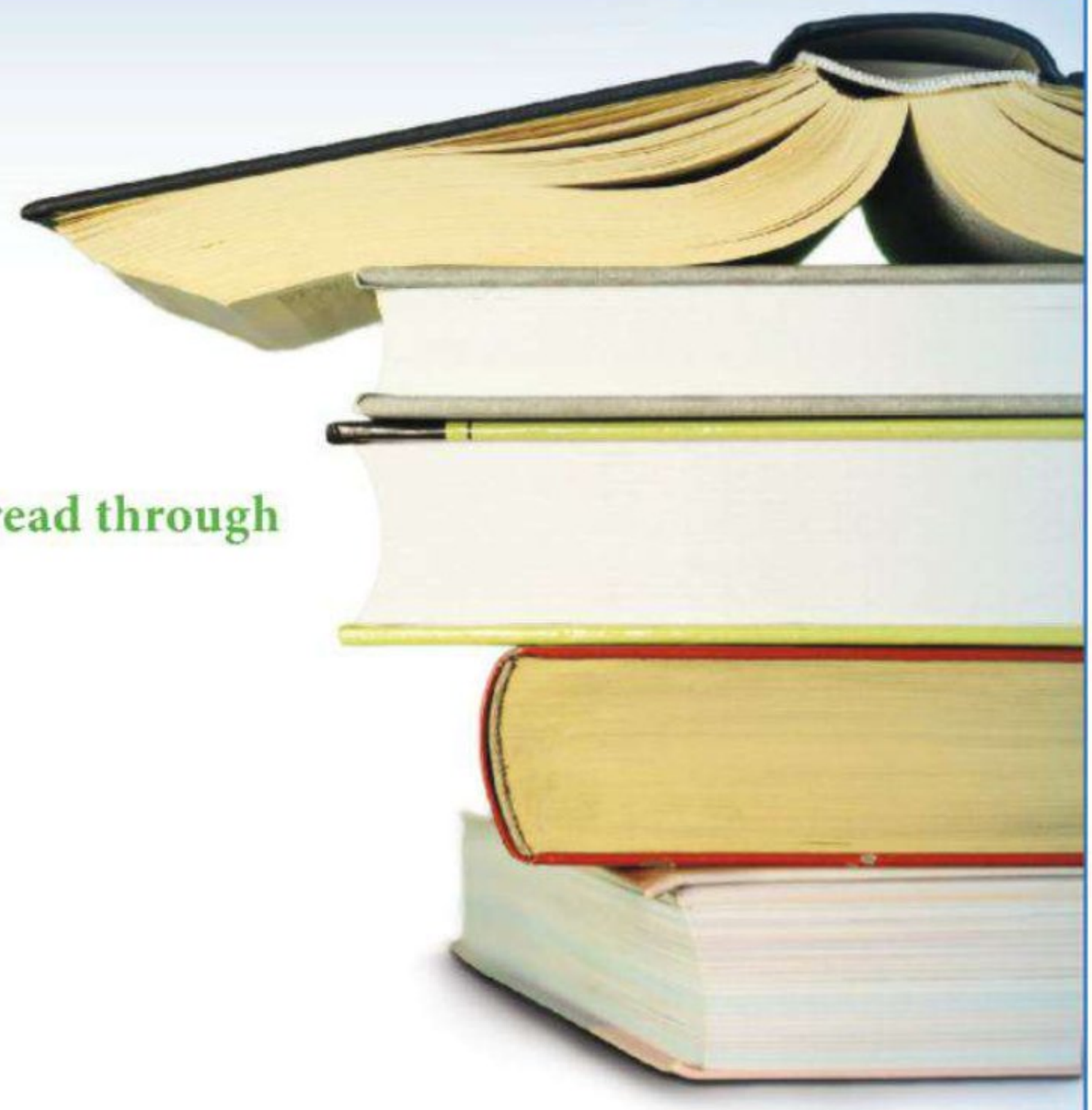

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PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RATHBONE

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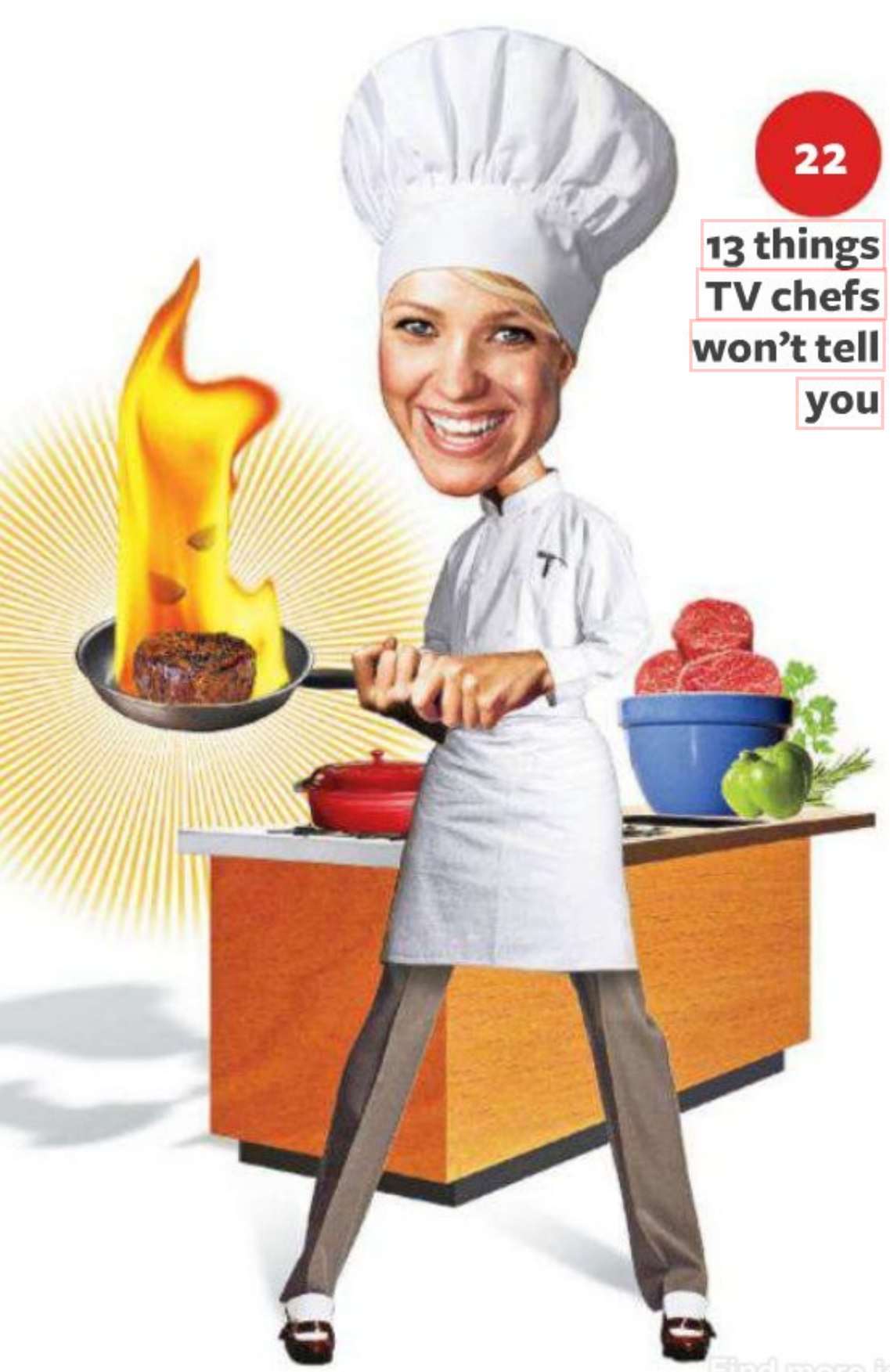

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ON THE COVER
PHOTOGRAPH BY YASU+JUNKO
STYLING BY SARA FOLDENAUER FOR KATE RYAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM KRAUSE. ILLUSTRATION BY EDDIE GUY

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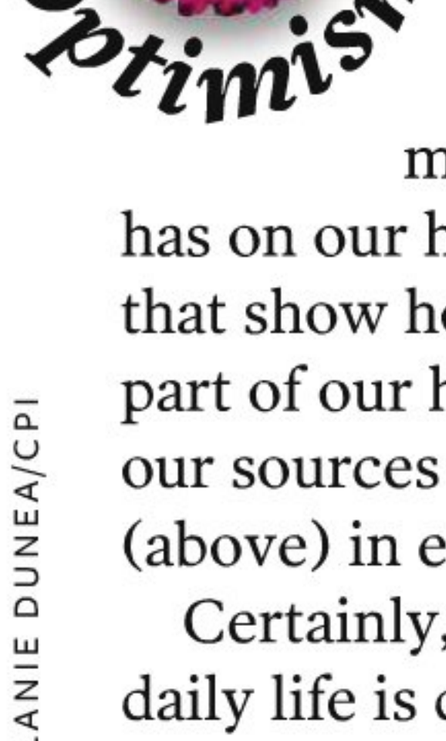
Editor's Note

LOOKING FOR THE JOKES?
Our humor columns are once again sprinkled throughout the magazine. Now you never know when you're going to come across a chuckle!

Here's to Happy Beginnings!

The coincidence does not escape my notice: I tap out this month's editor's note from the front seat of my hybrid Toyota so my hands can warm and my iPad can charge. A New Jersey resident with no electricity and heat after superstorm Sandy, I survey the damage to my neighborhood and marvel at the resilience of the millions without power and the thousands who lost their homes. Again and again, I hear people talk about their luck, their determination to rebuild, and the important bonds of family, friends, and community.

We're calling it. In the pages of *Reader's Digest*, 2013 is the Year of Optimism. In this kickoff issue (see page 72), journalist Fareed Zakaria reflects on why the country and the world are entering their best years, Michael J. Fox writes about the path to his first smile of the day, and Anna Quindlen describes a momentous life experience and the surprising lesson she learned. This issue looks around, but future issues will turn inward. Anticipate a test to gauge how optimistic you really are, a report on the impact optimism has on our health, and stories from the world's best writers that show how the power of positive thinking is an essential part of our humanity—limited only by our imaginations and our sources of inspiration. Watch for the flower symbol (above) in each issue for that month's optimism hit.

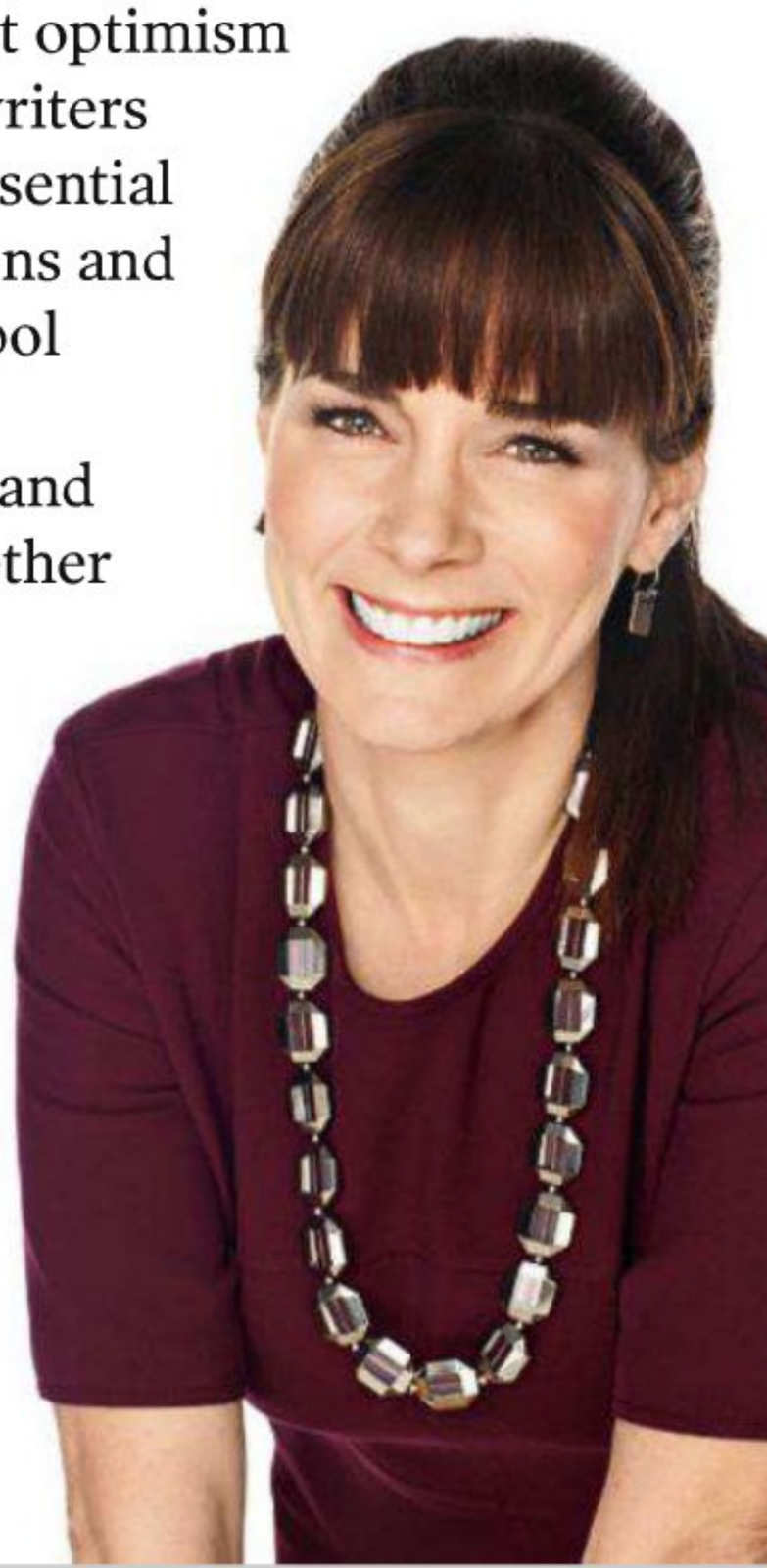


Certainly, this country faces enormous challenges, and daily life is difficult, grueling even, for many. But whether I'm observing damage in New Jersey or chatting with an employment-challenged 25-year-old, I see the bright light of hope in people's eyes.

Here's to our happy New Year. May we all continue to find reasons to be hopeful, grateful, and passionate. (And may my power kick back on soon!)

L. Vaccariello

I invite you to e-mail me at liz@rd.com.
Follow me on Twitter @LizVacc.



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React

LETTERS ON THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

Amazing Animals

"Hero Pets" was so heartwarming. I especially liked the story about Buttercup, the potbellied pig who helps special-needs students. As Buttercup demonstrates, pigs and other pets are smart, sensitive, and affectionate companions.

Lindsay Pollard-Post, Holland, Michigan

Conflicting Candidates

I read with interest your interviews with our presidential candidates ("The *RD* Interviews: President Barack Obama and Mitt Romney"). You graced us with two very insightful interviews with good questions! No debate, no facts with a lot of spin—just thought-provoking information. I found it very helpful in my decision. *Joe Duggan,* via e-mail

In the midst of perhaps the most defining election for this generation and subsequent generations, I found the softball questions asked to be sophomoric at best. I suspect readers would want to read about the economy, debt, health care, and the survival of our children and grandchildren. *Steve Lynch,* Valrico, Florida

The Digest Dozen

You've made my year by printing 12 issues starting in January 2013! I subscribe to 15-plus magazines, but the only one digested cover to cover is *Reader's Digest.*

Chris Huffman, Hickory, North Carolina

GET PUBLISHED

Tell Us Your Stories!

We're looking for our readers' best writing, photography, and videos. Show us your stuff on our new Tumblr blog, StoryBox (rdstorybox.tumblr.com). This month, we want you to: **Tell us the one thing you swear you'll *never* do again.**

LET'S PLAY!

OUR PHOTO, YOUR CAPTION

"'In the jungle, the mighty jungle ...'"
Seth Jennings

"Life in Narnia wasn't what you expected, right?" *Henrik Anchelia*

"Great, just lie there while I do the lion's share of knitting."
Ludwig Juliata Simbajon

"The mane activity today is just lion around." *Robin Mack-Roberts*

"He has been like a sheep ever since he saw my robe and realized the leopard is missing." *Nikhil Deo*

"I told you Grandma needed new glasses." *Amanda Lucas*

"Catnap, anyone?"
Anne Adrales-Barrios

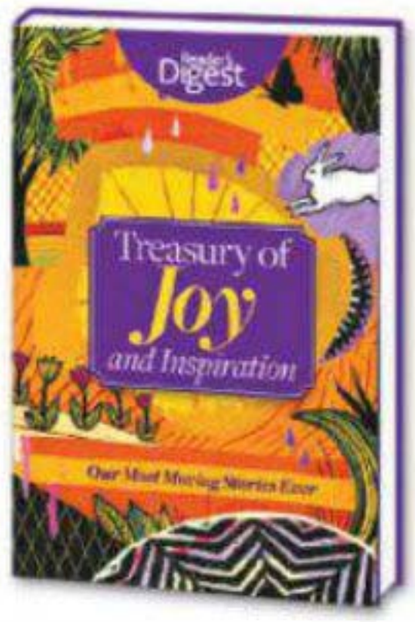
"If I play dead, maybe she won't remember the vet appointment."
Curtis Miller

"Who needs insurance with protection like this?" *Rishard Lee*

Responses submitted via facebook.com/readersdigest

A Joyful Reaction

I am enjoying the wonderful stories in the *Treasury of Joy and Inspiration* a few at a time to make the good reads last. I grew up during the Depression. Money was very tight in those days, but *RD* has always been an important part of our household. When I married, my folks sent us a gift subscription. Then I subscribed for my new family, and I renew each year for myself and my kids. *Mary Peachman,* Red Bluff, California



Remarkable Recovery

"My Lost Month of Madness" is inspiring and informational. Thank goodness for the dedicated doctors and research staff who contributed to Susannah Cahalan's successful treatment. And bless her loving family for never giving up hope in the depths of their despair. Exploring every avenue available to obtain a correct diagnosis may save a life, and in this case, it saved Susannah's.

Bob Phillips, Holland Patent, New York

A Dad's Perspective

When I read "The Essay That Rocked the Internet," I had to share my experience. I'm a 50-year-old dad of four grown kids who has been married for 28 years. My wife stayed home (her choice), and I worked. I get tears in my eyes when I think of the time I missed when the kids were young. I have told my kids that

MATTHIAS CLAMER/GETTY IMAGES

I feel bad about not being there a lot. But they looked at me and said, "You were not out bar-hopping. You were working." So would I do it all over again? Yes, because we may not have had everything, but we had—and still have—a beautiful family. *Brian Cinea,* Salem, Connecticut

Seasonal Savings

Some of the ladies in my church group think that I am the smartest gal in town! I shared "10 Things to Buy in the Next 60 Days" (Food Digest), and they really appreciated the information, as did I.

Karin Wallace, via e-mail

RD, Your Way

I would like to thank the Reader's Digest Association for permitting the American Printing House for the Blind, in Louisville, Kentucky, to produce *Reader's Digest* in alternative formats for blind and visually impaired readers. The audio version, made possible by your generosity, has saved me from missing out on some very good reads!

Ryan Miller, Loveland, Ohio

Family Lessons

I used Word Power to boost my vocabulary as a kid. Now this column is a regular part of our family dinners. I read each question, then my family make their best educated guesses.

Pam Keseric, Hinsdale, Illinois

Editor's note:
See our Word Power special on page 118.

READER'S DIGEST ... EVERYWHERE

Send letters to letters@rd.com or React, Reader's Digest, PO Box 6100, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1600. Include your full name, address, e-mail, and daytime phone number. We may edit letters and use them in all print and electronic media.
Contribute For short humor items, please see page 64. We regret that we cannot accept or acknowledge unsolicited artwork, photographs, or article-length manuscripts.
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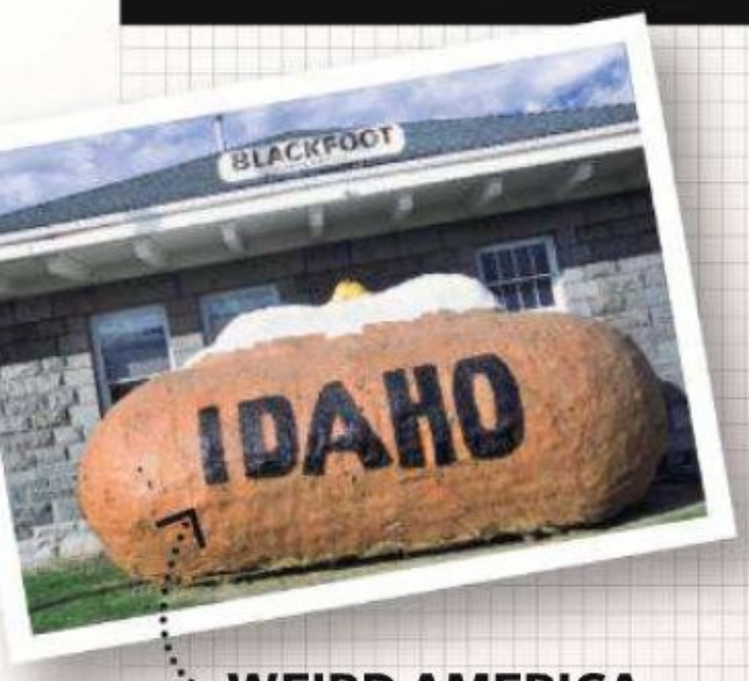
RD Recommends*

GREATEST HITS FROM OUR STAFF BLOG

* **In case you missed it,** go to **readersdigest.com/recommends.**

Of Immediate Interest



WEIRD AMERICA GETS A LITTLE EASIER TO FIND

Grab the GPS! Funny site Eccentric Roadside (eccentricroadside.blogspot.com) lovingly chronicles big and bizarre oddball attractions across the country.

INSTANT PICK-ME-UPS

Feeling low? Try emergency compliment.com, which offers cheeky sayings to feed your ego and boost your mood, like "Your prom date still thinks about you all the time."

KITTENS BOOST BRAINPOWER!

Next time you have a pile of work, coo over baby animals: A Japanese study showed viewing cute images increases concentration and productivity.

COOL NEW APP FOR WANNABE DIRECTORS

What Instagram does for your photos, Cinemagram does for your videos: filters your phone flicks and "freezes" them into animated snapshots.

CAN YOUR PHONE REPLACE YOUR WALLET?

Maybe. A *Wired* reporter tried a month with no purse, paying her way with just two smart phones. And ...? She missed having coins for laundry but otherwise wound up "happier, healthier, and ready to ditch cash forever."

STUDY: WATCH HORROR FILMS, SLASH CALORIES

New research shows that scary movies make your adrenaline surge, burning nearly as many calories as a 30-minute walk. The top "workout"? Kubrick's *The Shining* (184 cals).

JANE AUSTEN GOES GRAPHIC

Critically acclaimed artists give a visual spin on classic novels in a bold new series. By turns playful and beautiful, it's a new perspective on enduring works.

FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT RX DRUGS

Our health editor reports how the recent spread of fungal meningitis has uncovered the shockingly large role that compound pharmacies play in our drug care.

ORDINARY PEOPLE WITH EXTRAORDINARY TALENTS

Armchair astronomers volunteering for NASA discover a new planet, a teen who could help docs diagnose breast cancer, and others.

AWESOME DAD LAUNCHES HIS BOY'S TRAIN INTO SPACE

Amazing and heartwarming video via the Smithsonian: A father and son attach a toy train named Stanley to a weather balloon, sending it on an exciting and dramatic journey 18 miles into the stratosphere.

Of Lasting Interest

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LEIGHTY BRUCE/AGE FOTOSTOCK. VINCENZO LOMBARDO/GETTY IMAGES. WARNER BROTHERS/COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION

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Laughter, the Best Medicine

GRIN AND BEAR IT

No, this bear isn't dancing to "Gangnam Style." But it is doing its best to keep its balance while standing upright. Either way, it's the coolest bear in the Arctic.

Wearing a turtleneck is like getting strangled by a really weak guy all day.

Comedian *Mitch Hedberg*

Have you heard the expression "If these walls could talk?" It means "If people only knew the interesting things that happen in this room." But whenever I hear that expression, I always think, What could be happening in that room that is more interesting than the fact that the walls can talk? Comedian *Lawson Leong*

What did one snowman say to the other? "I smell carrots too."

Have Thee Another?

What were the top-selling beers of 1800? Glad you asked!

- Benedict Arnold's Dark and Bitter
- St. Pauli Revere
- Bonaparte Exile Ale Half-Pints
- Ben Franklin's Shocking Good Lager
- O'Duels

From topfive.com

HOW ABOUT CALLING AAA!?

I learned how to change a flat tire by watching my mom. All you have to do is pull over, stand next to the car, and make a sad face.

Comedian *Mark Chalifoux*

STEVEN KAZLOWSKI/NATURE PICTURE LIBRARY (3)

The woman sashays out of the bedroom modeling a lovely garment.

"Look at this!" she says to her husband. "I've had it for 20 years, and it still fits."

Her husband nods. "It's a scarf."

Submitted by *D. Golightly*, South Shields, Great Britain

So That's Who He Is

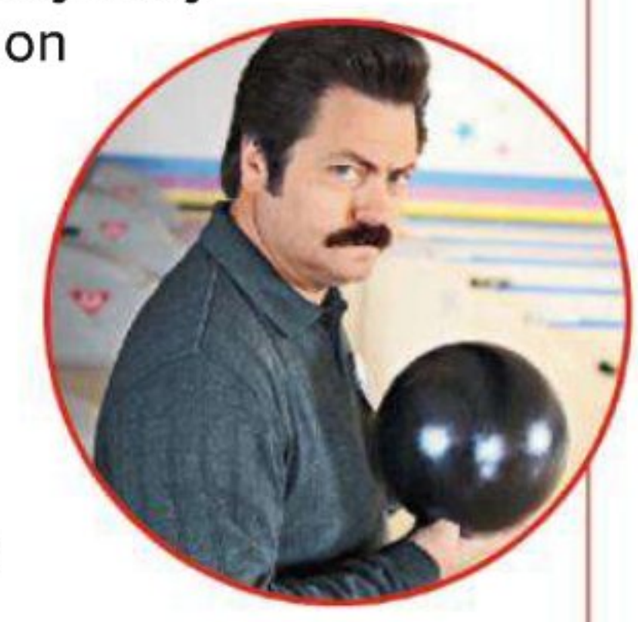
This correction ran in a recent issue of *Vogue*: "In the September profile of Chelsea Clinton, Dan Baer was mistakenly identified as an interior designer. He is a deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the U.S. Department of State."

In the natural childbirth classes my wife and I took, the birthing process was represented by a hand puppet being pushed through a sock. So at the actual birth, I was shocked to see all this blood. The thing I had prepared myself for was a lot of lint.

Comedian *Steve Scrovan*

ACCORDING TO RON SWANSON ...

Ron Swanson, played by Nick Offerman on the TV show *Parks and Recreation*, is known for his stern absurdities. Here are a few:



- "Fish: for sport only, not for meat. Fish meat is practically a vegetable."
- "When people get a little too chummy with me, I like to call them by the wrong name."
- "Cultivating a manly musk puts your opponents on notice."

Source: ronsays.tumblr.com

TWEETER'S DIGEST: FOOD EDITION

There are two kinds of Mexican restaurants. Those that serve fresh authentic cuisine, and ones that serve the cheap, greasy junk I love.

@ConanO'Brien

I bet when they discovered the radish everyone was like, "Let's name it Rad!" and one guy was all "Let's dial that back a bit." @bagyants

A wife texts her husband on a frosty winter's morning. "Windows frozen!"

Her husband texts back, "Pour lukewarm water over it."

Five minutes later comes her reply: "Computer completely messed up now." *Catherin Hiscox*, Hemel Hempstead, Great Britain

My husband asked me to dress up as a nurse tonight to fulfill his fantasy ... that we have health insurance. Comedian *Wendy Liebman*

Your favorite new joke, funny anecdote, or crazy news story might be worth $$$. See page 64 for details.

CHRIS HASTON/COURTESY NBC

Hometown Heroes

Turning tragedy around: Shelly (far right) with daughter Kara

Mother of Invention

Desperate to soothe her daughter's pain, Shelly Henry developed a unique medical device

BY ALISON CAPORIMO

Shelly Henry, 45, chief revenue officer for a medical-device company in Oklahoma City, still chokes up when she recalls the day nearly 12 years ago when her daughter, Kara, almost died.

Kara, then 15, took a ride with a few classmates to high school that morning. Her friend ran a stop sign, and a truck struck the car's passenger side, where Kara was

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRAVIS TANK

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sitting, singing along to the radio.

When Shelly, a premed student and single mother, arrived at the scene, she saw a knot of flashing emergency vehicle lights. Then she saw her daughter lying motionless on the side of the road. "At that point, I was just hoping to be able to say goodbye to her," Shelly remembers.

A witness to the accident had pulled Kara from the car. Shelly ran to her daughter, and Kara whispered, "I'm not dead."

Two of the girls escaped the accident with minor injuries. Another girl had a broken neck and rode alongside Kara in an ambulance to Baptist Medical Center a few miles away. Shelly followed in her own car, thinking, Can we get there already? I just want her out of pain.

The crash had damaged three of Kara's vertebrae, dislocated six disks in her spine, and nearly crushed several organs in her abdomen. Doctors feared a two-inch shard of bone pushing into her lower spinal cord could paralyze her. With Shelly's permission, surgeons repaired the bone using a risky new technique. Because the treatment hadn't been used on many patients, the surgeons warned that Kara might not walk again. She was also advised to avoid pregnancy, as it might further damage her back.

Just a few days after surgery, though, Kara took her first step. In 2001, wearing a back brace, she moved to her grandparents' home to continue her recovery. She'd be able to navigate their house with a wheelchair, though she was in chronic pain.

That year, Shelly resumed classes at the University of Central Oklahoma and soon took a job as a technician in a local pain clinic. Shelly tried the clinic's regimen of treatments to ease Kara's pain, but none worked. She was devastated. "To see your child suffering takes everything that you have inside and rips it out," she says.

"To see your child suffering takes everything you have inside and rips it out," says Shelly.

One day at work, short on time, Shelly made a serendipitous discovery: When she applied laser and electrical stimulation—two pain-management treatments traditionally used one at a time—to a patient's upper spine and arms at the same time, the patient said, "I don't know what you just did, but it worked!"

Kara, who had begun taking history classes at the University of Central Oklahoma in 2004, was still in full-body pain. Shelly took Kara to the clinic and tried the unique treatment on her lower back. It immediately alleviated her pain. "I had

TABLET BONUS

To watch a video of Shelly Henry and Kara Christy, download the *Reader's Digest* app for your iPad or Kindle Fire.

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Kara's daughter, Lillian (center), was born in 2010.

been in agony for nearly four years," says Kara. "But after the treatment, the relief was more than I could have imagined."

Shelly partnered with doctors to test the new device. The results showed Kara's pain relief had scientific basis. With the hard evidence in hand, Shelly patented Neurolumen, a portable device—made up of six Velcro straps embedded with LEDs, lasers, and electrical stimulators—that wraps around painful body parts to reduce swelling and increase circulation. By 2010, she had finally raised enough money to fund a company to sell the device. The FDA-approved Neurolumen is now available, with a doctor's prescription, for purchase for $1,995, or for rent for $50 per month through neurolumen.com, or for treatments at many hospitals and clinics for $25 per session.

For Shelly, though, Kara's recovery is the ultimate success. Defying all odds, Kara even became pregnant. She and her husband, Kyle, welcomed baby Lillian to the family in 2010.

Kara manages Neurolumen sales and marketing and hasn't taken pain medication in nearly ten years. Says Shelly, "Watching Kara get better has kept me going. I want to help other mothers get their children out of pain without narcotics." ■

SAY WHAT?

About ten years ago, Pete [Seeger] told Arlo [Guthrie], "I don't know if I want to continue doing these big shows. My voice isn't what it used to be. I can't play like I used to play."

Arlo replied, "Pete, the hearing of the people ain't what it used to be. It shouldn't be a problem."

From *Grand* magazine

Just two weeks ago I had back surgery.

Thank you Laser Spine Institute.

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Medicaid currently not accepted.

CONTEST WINNER!

America's Most Interesting Town

BY DAMON BERES

As president of Toby the Clown Foundation, Albin "Big Al" Pelski leads the way in entertaining the sick and elderly.

In the previous three issues of *Reader's Digest*, we reported on the winners of our contest, ten terrific towns across America. Now we unveil the grand-prize winner (drumroll, please!): **Lake Placid, Florida,** for its unique variety of nature, culture, and fun. Take a mini tour and see what the fuss is all about.

The world's largest crop of big fuchsia-colored caladiums blooms in Lake Placid from June to October.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM KRAUSE

Toby's Clown School

Thanks to Toby's Clown School, which has trained more than 1,500 professional kooks since 1993, Lake Placid boasts more clowns per capita than anywhere else in the country. But you won't see them under the big top. These clowns goof around for smaller audiences—in hospitals and nursing homes, for instance. For $100 and 24 credit hours in classes like History of Clowning, aspiring cutups get a makeup kit, a spot in the student clown show, and, if all goes well, a clown certificate.

A City of Growth

Lake Placid grows 98 percent of all caladium bulbs on 1,500 acres of fertile soil. Hence its nickname: the Caladium Capital of the World. The abundance of the ornamental green-and-red plant inspired locals to launch the Caladium Festival in 1989. The event, which features arts and crafts and an antique car show, attracts up to 25,000 visitors annually.

Mural Town U.S.A.

For more than two decades, local and visiting artists have embellished the facades of Lake Placid's businesses with murals honoring central Florida's history and the area's flora and fauna. "Cracker Trail Cattle Drive," by artist Keith Goodson, is the largest of the town's 44 murals, covering the back wall of a grocery store 175 feet long by 30 feet high with a scene of cattlemen driving a herd through Lake Placid. ■

Monica Turner's mural is one of 44 around town that have put Lake Placid on the map.

ADVERTISEMENT

Just Wait Until You See What's Inside!

The Digest

The Best for January

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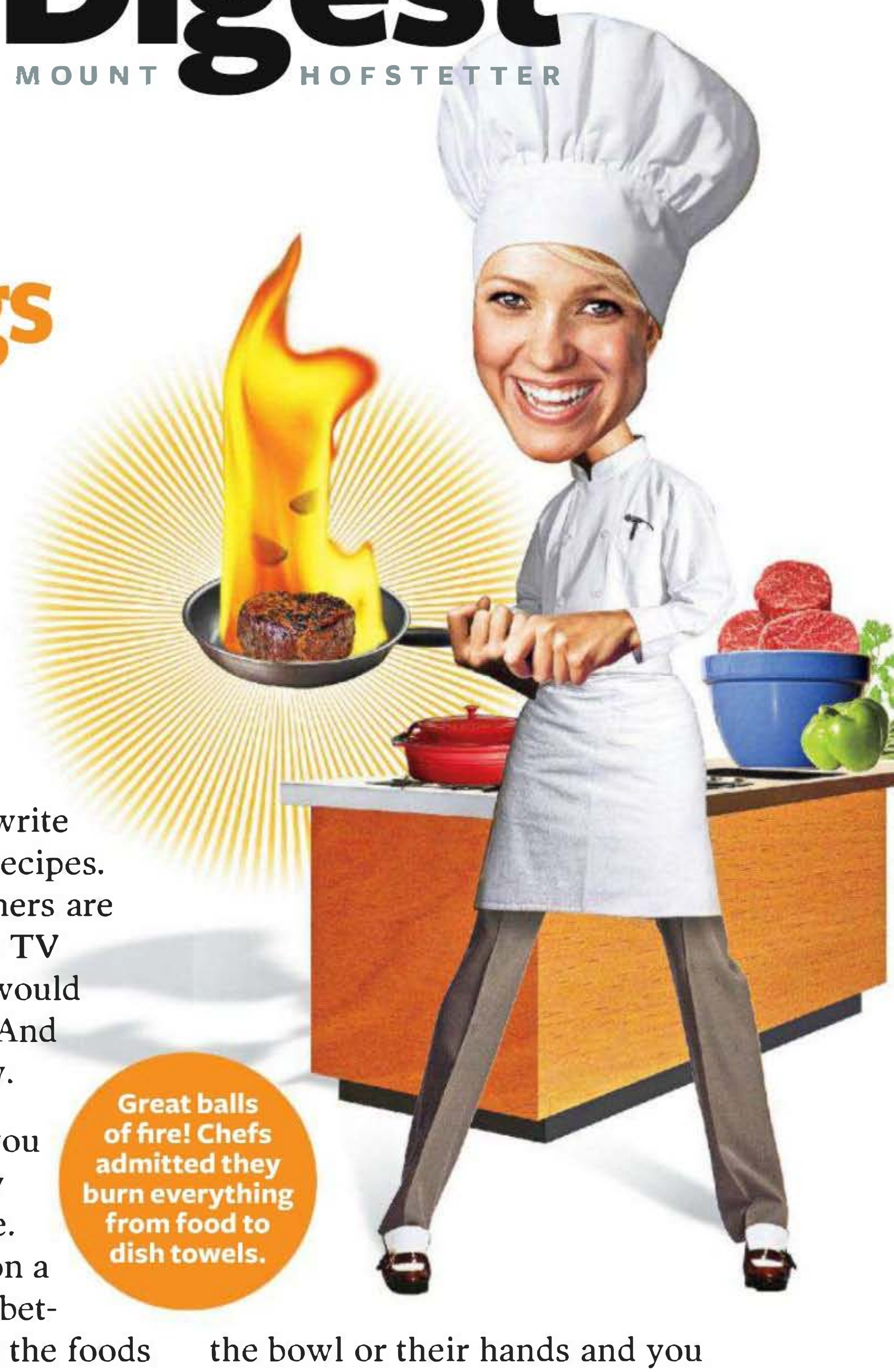
Find surprises in the everyday: California-based artist Alan Sailer uses a pellet gun to shoot at holiday ornaments and other sundries, capturing the moments of impact with a homemade flash. Says Sailer, "I go to garage sales every weekend and look at things, wondering how they'd work as targets." Photo shoot, indeed.

ADVICE

13 Things TV Chefs Won't Tell You

BY MICHELLE CROUCH



1 Many TV chefs don't write or develop their own recipes. Some don't have time. Others are more focused on being on TV than on cooking, so they would rather pay someone else. And a few just don't know how.

2 If you want the food you make to look as pretty as mine, don't fill the plate. Putting something small on a bigger plate always looks better, especially if you stack the foods or lay them against one another.

3 When a chef forgets to say something important, we have to do what's called a voice-over. That's when you're watching and all of a sudden, you don't see the chef's face. Instead, you see a close-up of the bowl or their hands and you hear them saying, "Now add a quarter teaspoon of cinnamon." With the best talent, you'll almost never hear a voice-over.

4 Obviously, we're not all going to sit around twiddling our thumbs waiting for a roast or a

Great balls of fire! Chefs admitted they burn everything from food to dish towels.

ILLUSTRATION BY EDDIE GUY

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lasagna to cook. So there are people in a second kitchen behind the scenes cooking a bunch of versions of the same recipe so it will be ready to go at different stages. That's called a swap-out.

5 Sometimes, the dishes we taste on camera are stone cold because of a swap-out. So we may be saying, "Mmm," but really it tastes awful. We just smile and stomach it.

6 Sure, we burn things. When that happens, we just make sure to pick it up with the charred side away from the camera, and we never flip it over.

7 Sorry, but we are not going to tell you how bad a recipe is for you. While more chefs are acknowledging that we have a responsibility to people's health, you're never going to see calorie counts when we're making chocolate cake.

8 Here's how to enhance just about any dish: Add some acidity. Whether from fresh citrus juice or vinegar, acidity wakes up the palate and makes food jump and pop.

9 Before I host a cooking segment, I go through every step of the recipe with the art director, prop stylist, and food stylist. They ensure I have every tool I need, they *mise en place*—or prepare and measure out—every ingredient, and they make the finished dish look gorgeous. So keep in mind that it will take you a lot longer to follow this recipe at home—and it probably won't look quite as perfect.

10 Please don't follow my recipes to the letter. A recipe should be a loose map to guide you, but since no two ingredients are exactly the same, you should be constantly tasting the dish and adapting as you go along.

11 When I say something should be brown, I mean brown—not tan. Whether searing a piece of fish or baking bread, home cooks generally underbake food. Really yummy, magical things happen when food turns brown.

12 A garnish can make anything look better. Go ahead and throw some chopped fresh greens or herbs on top. They smell nice, create a beautiful contrast in color, and give the whole plate a little zing.

13 In the restaurant, I cook in a very methodical way; I use something, and then I clean it right away. But in competitions like *Hell's Kitchen* or *MasterChef,* the kitchens get destroyed. Afterward, there are dozens and dozens of dishes, anchovies on the floor, mayonnaise is splattered all over the wall, and you can still hear the stove clicking because someone left the gas on.

For more insider secrets from a TV chef, go to rd.com/january.

Sources: Alex Guarnaschelli of *Alex's Day Off;* Buddy Valastro of *Cake Boss* and *Kitchen Boss;* Richard Blais, winner of *Top Chef All-Stars;* Candice Kumai, author of *Cook Yourself Sexy* and an *Iron Chef America* judge; Virginia Willis, a culinary television producer in Atlanta; and a New York City food publicist

HEALTHY LIVING

The Soup That Changed My Life

Nourishing greens are surprisingly delicious in a beloved, magical soup

BY ANNA THOMAS

FROM *Eating Well*

Taste and see: Thousands of green-soup fans promise you'll like it!

It was a gray-sky day, and outside the cabin, a bitter wind was swatting down the last damp leaves. I needed to put myself in a better mood—and to lose a few pounds.

So I picked up bunches of the dark greens that thrive in cool weather: shiny leaves of chard, spinach, kale, Italian parsley, and cilantro. I started to chop. I threw some sliced onion into hot olive oil and heard the happy sizzle. I added garlic. Soon the cabin was filled with that greatest of perfumes. My spirits were already lifting.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RATHBONE

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The washed greens went into another pot with water and sea salt and a diced potato. When the onions, slowly sizzling in the skillet, turned the color of caramel toffee, into the soup pot they went with the greens. A pinch of red pepper, a splash of lemon juice, and then I pureed the soup. So easy. So green. And so delicious.

I ate that first steaming bowlful, and I sat up straighter and grinned wide. I was infused with phytochemicals, those mysterious, good-for-you compounds that I didn't completely understand. Did I realize then that green soup would change my life? No, but over the next week, it was green soup for lunch and then a bowl of green for dinner, dressed up with croutons or crumbles of feta cheese—divine. I had my diet plan. More green, less everything else.

Many pots of soup later, I was back in my skinny jeans. I wrote about green soup for the *Los Angeles Times*, and the avalanche was unleashed. E-mails—a trickle, then a flood. *I used to make one with turnip greens ... My version has broccoli ...* The world loved green soup and wanted to talk about it.

I cooked probably 50 different green soups over the next decade, no two alike but every one following that original template. Each year, there were new inspirations to turn into a soup. Green, green—not so much a soup as a way of life.

Hallelujah!

Anna's Perfect Green Soup

Makes 8 servings, about 1¼ cups each
Total Time: about 1 hour

- 2 tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for garnish
- 2 yellow onions, chopped
- 1 tsp. salt, divided
- ¼ cup arborio rice
- 1 lb. greens: green chard, kale, mustard greens, or beet greens
- 14 cups gently packed spinach (about 12 oz.)
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- Big pinch cayenne pepper
- 1 tbs. lemon juice, or more to taste

1. Heat oil in large skillet over high heat. Add onions and ¼ tsp. salt; cook, stirring, until onions begin to brown, about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low, add 2 tbs. water, and cover. Cook, stirringfrequently, until onions are greatly reduced and have a caramel color, 25 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, combine 3 cups water, remaining ¾ tsp. salt, and rice in soup pot or Dutch oven. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer, cover, and cook 15 minutes. Trim ribs and tough stems from the greens and spinach; discard. Coarsely chop greens and spinach.

3. When rice has cooked 15 minutes, stir in greens. Return to a simmer; cover and cook 10 minutes. When onions are caramelized, stir a little greens' simmering liquid into them; immediately add them to rice along with spinach, broth, and cayenne. Return to a simmer, cover, and cook until spinach is tender but still bright green, about 5 minutes more.

4. Puree soup in pot with immersion blender until perfectly smooth, or in regular blender in batches. Stir in lemon juice and garnish with olive oil. ■

FOOD STYLIST: MATT VOHR FOR HALLEY RESOURCES; PROP STYLIST: LAURIE RAAB FOR APOSTROPHE

ANNA THOMAS'S LATEST BOOK, *LOVE SOUP*, WON THE 2010 JAMES BEARD AWARD FOR BEST HEALTHY FOCUS COOKBOOK.

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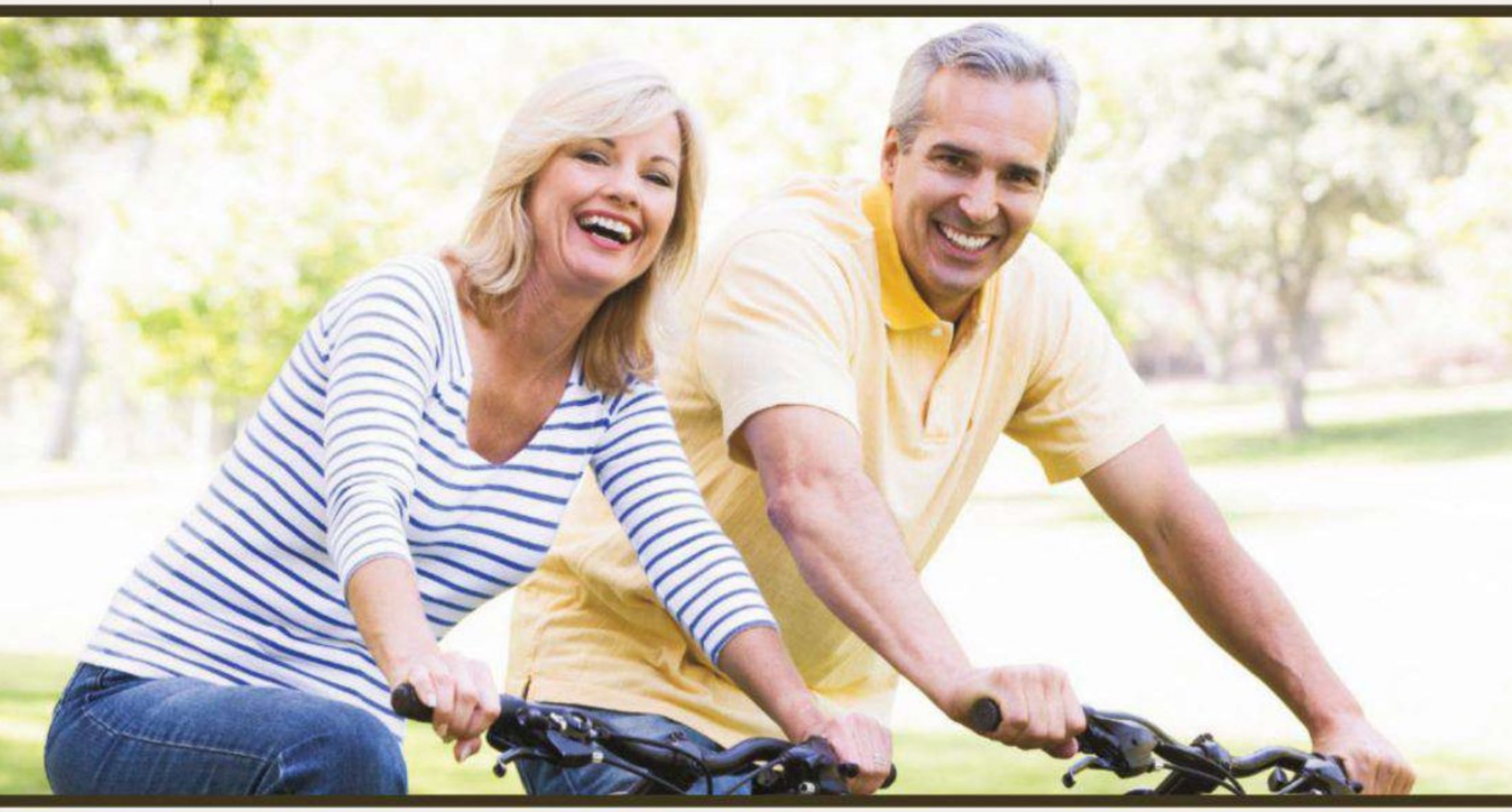

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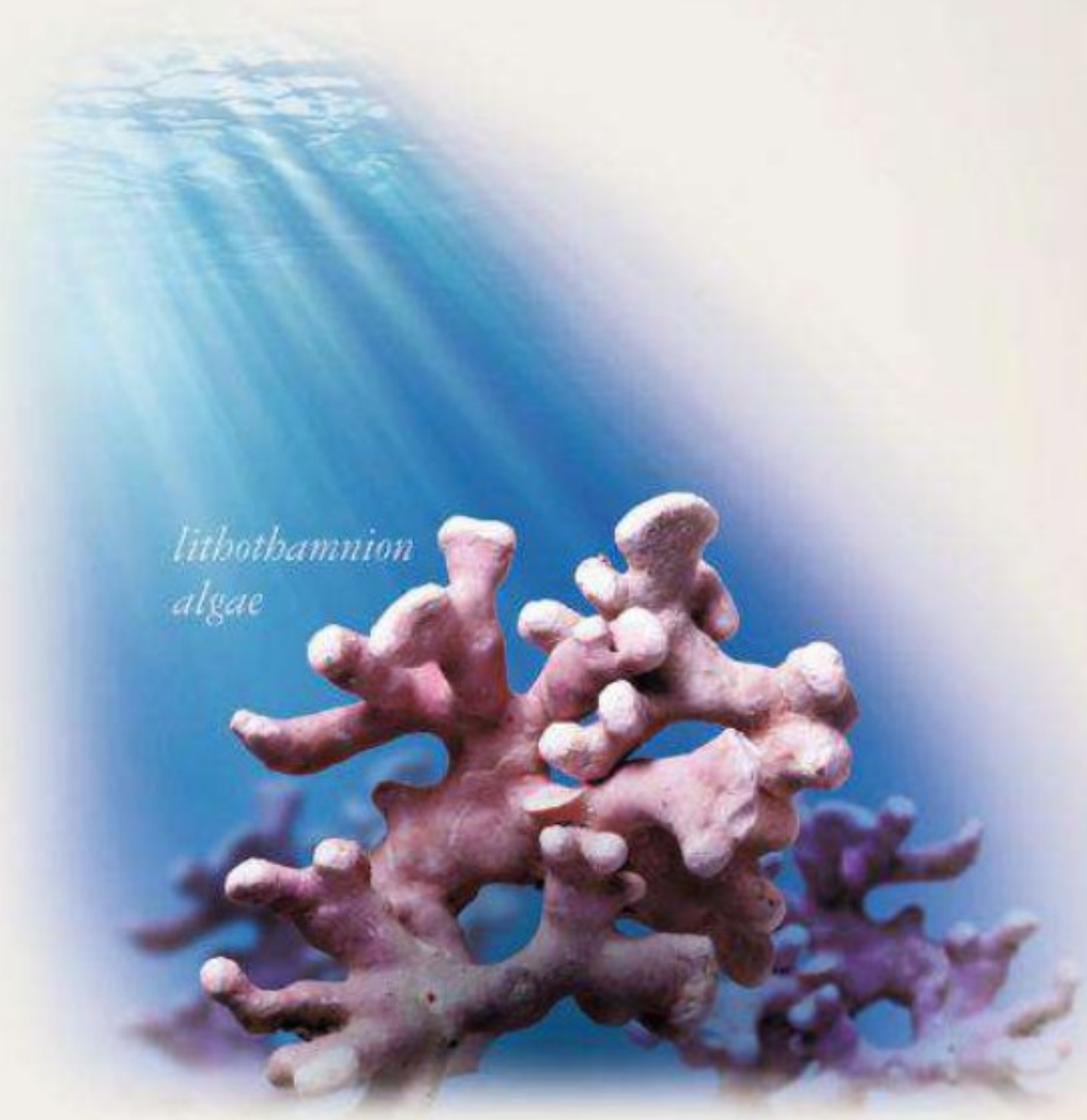

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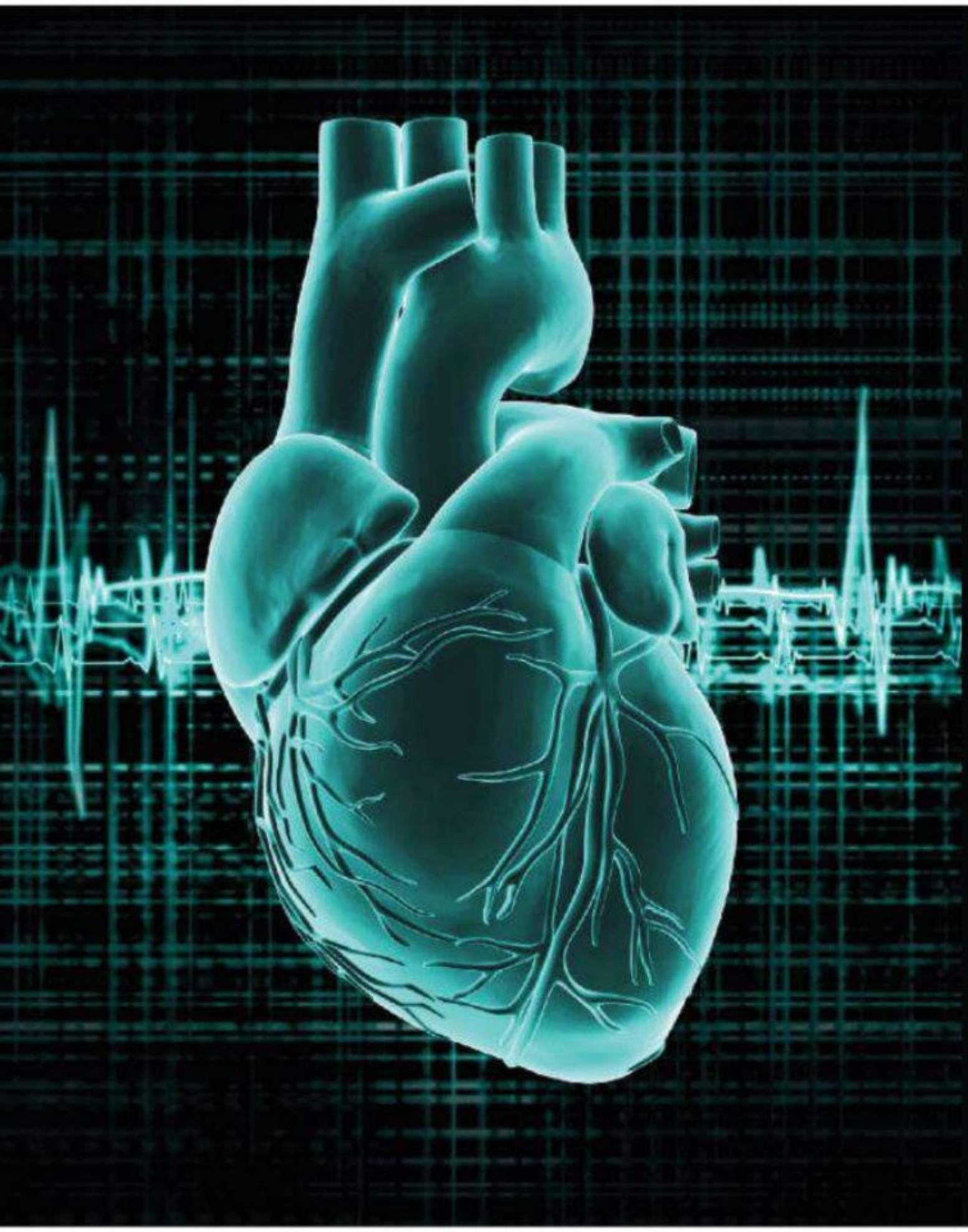

NEWS UPDATE

Heart Threats You're Ignoring

These underrated factors may play a surprising role in your heart health

About 600,000 people die annually from heart disease in the United States.

High Blood Pressure

More than 35 million Americans have uncontrolled high blood pressure—and about 40 percent have no idea, according to a recent CDC report. The condition is serious: For every 20 points above a systolic blood pressure of 115 and every ten points above a diastolic reading of 75, the odds of dying from heart disease or stroke double. If you haven't had a blood pressure reading recently, get tested at your next appointment. And if you know you have high blood pressure, take your medication as prescribed and monitor your BP at home if your doctor advises it.

Early Menopause

Women who go through the change before age 46 have double

SCOTT TYSICK/GETTY IMAGES

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the risk of heart disease and stroke of those who experience it later, Johns Hopkins researchers recently found. Therefore, women who go through menopause early should be extra vigilant about other heart risk factors, like weight, cholesterol, and blood pressure. Smoking, a known heart threat, is a double whammy, since smokers enter menopause about two years earlier on average.

Your Partner's Mental Health

Depression is common among heart attack survivors, but a recent study shows that it also affects their partners: Spouses of heart attack survivors were 17 percent more likely to require a prescription for antidepressants in the year after the event than before. Authors say spouses may be reluctant to take care of themselves while focusing on a partner's recovery, but it's essential for them to seek care if they suspect depression symptoms, which are themselves a risk factor for heart problems.

STRENGTHEN YOUR TICKER IN 3 STEPS

The expert physicians at the hit syndicated show *The Doctors* share some of their top heart-protective moves.

● **STAND UP, RIGHT NOW**

When you sit for long stretches, triglycerides increase, good cholesterol drops, and your body becomes inflamed, which creates a perfect storm for a heart attack or stroke.

● **DON'T OVER-RELY ON SPECIAL FOODS**

Just because a study finds dark chocolate reduces blood pressure slightly doesn't mean it will dramatically decrease your heart disease risk, especially if you don't have an otherwise healthy diet.

● **DITCH FAST FOOD**

It's packed with unnatural levels of heart-damaging sugar and fat. Your pancreas secretes insulin to help absorb it, which promotes fat storage. As your fat cells grow, they secrete toxic chemicals that raise heart disease risk. These foods also trigger dopamine, a brain chemical linked to addictive behavior.

From left: *The Doctors* cohosts Lisa Masterson, MD; Jim Sears, MD; Travis Stork, MD; and Andrew Ordon, MD. For more feel-great tips, watch *The Doctors* daily (check local listings).

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GENE BLEVINS/CORBIS

QUOTABLE QUOTES

YOUR VOCAL CORDS

"There's probably no part of the body that sees more trauma in a lifetime."

STEVEN ZEITELS, MD, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR LARYNGEAL SURGERY AND VOICE REHABILITATION AT MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL, TO ABC NEWS

MINI HEALTH BOOST

BLOW YOUR NOSE THE RIGHT WAY

No stranger to Kleenex? Betcha didn't know there's a good and a bad way to get rid of that mucus-y stuffiness. Turns out, honking both nostrils at the same time can create too much pressure in your nasal cavities and can push mucus deeper into your sinuses, prolonging symptoms, says *Woman's Day*. Instead, blow slowly, one nostril at a time.

One sneeze can spray **3,000** droplets going more than 100 mph.

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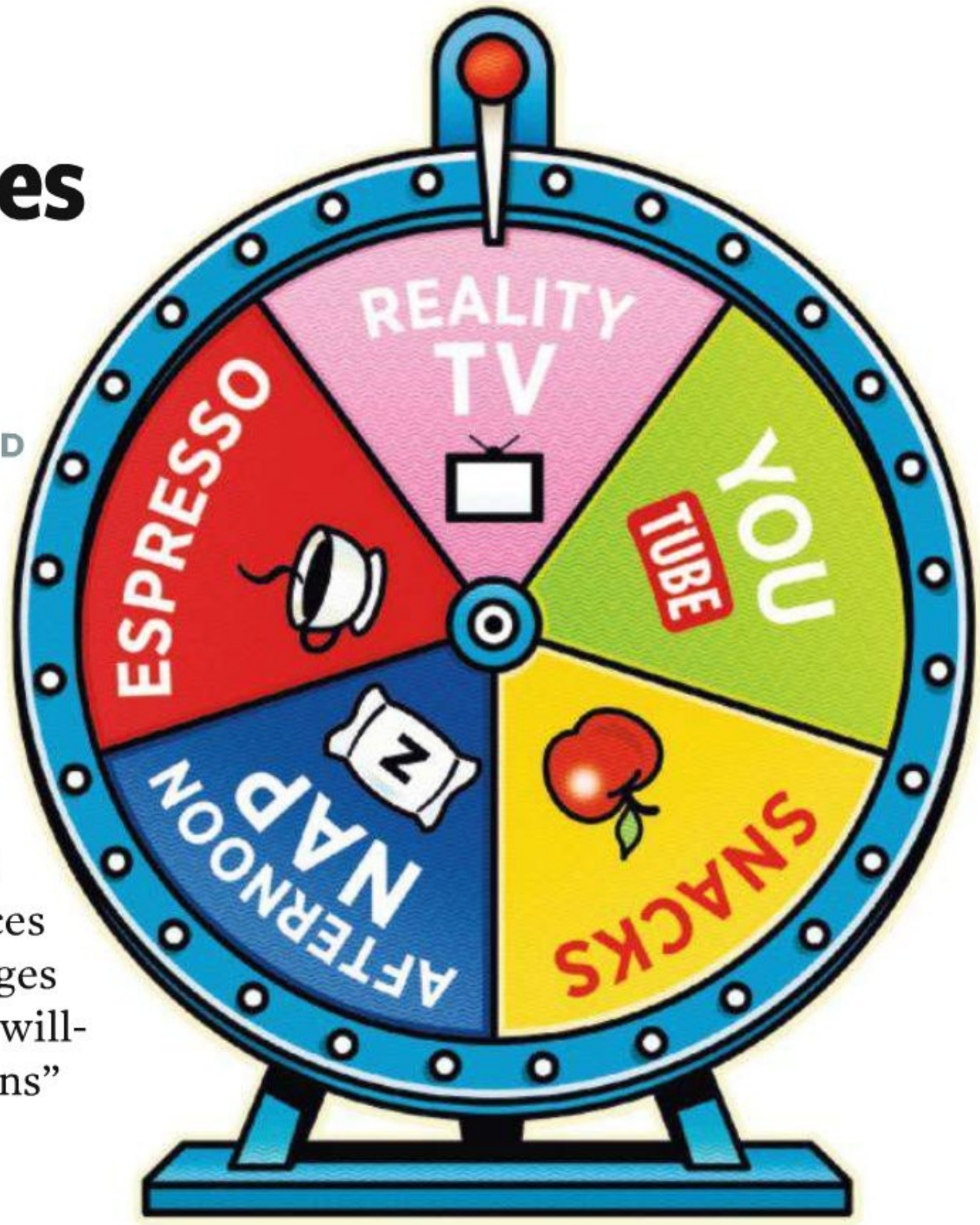
NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

Five Indulgences That Boost Self-Control

BY KELLY MCGONIGAL, PHD

FROM *Psychology Today*



Scientists have discovered that willpower is like a muscle that gets tired from exercise: Our self-control gets sapped by decisions, distractions, and stress. But anything that reduces stress, boosts mood, or recharges energy can help restore spent willpower. Treat these "temptations" as strategic indulgences:

Reality Television

Willpower is contagious, research suggests. Since many reality shows feature people overcoming obstacles as they lose weight, face their fears, or organize their clutter, you can "catch" extra self-control just by watching someone else pursue a goal.

Snacks

The brain uses energy for willpower. When blood sugar drops, your brain is less able to concentrate, so a small nibble can nudge the brain back into self-control mode. Eat protein or fiber for sustained willpower without post-snack regret.

Afternoon Nap

Willpower is often highest in the morning, when the brain is refreshed by sleep. When you're tired, it's harder to control impulses. A short power nap—which reduces stress and improves mood—can dial back the usual willpower drain.

YouTube

It's OK to get sucked into a few minutes of piano-playing kittens. Research shows that watching a funny video restores depleted willpower and can help you get back on track with difficult tasks.

Espresso

Caffeine gets a bad rap for causing energy crashes, but in reasonable doses, it can reduce stress. Studies show that small amounts of caffeine can balance the autonomic nervous system, making you calmer and more alert at the same time—perfect for resisting temptation.

ILLUSTRATION BY PETER AND MARIA HOEY

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ADVANCES

News from the World of Medicine

Natural Remedy for Chronic Pain

A large analysis confirms that acupuncture provides real relief for arthritis, headaches, and back, neck, and shoulder pain. The recent report, which reviewed about 18,000 patients in 29 separate studies, found that the ancient treatment performed significantly better than either no treatment or a sham treatment (which involves placing needles in random locations). The authors say this research suggests that the technique's effects are not merely a placebo and would be a reasonable treatment for patients with chronic pain.

Source: Andrew Vickers, PhD, statistician, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, New York, nccam.nih.gov/health/acupuncture

Device for Drug-Free GERD Relief

The EndoStim system, powered by a matchbook-size device implanted under the skin in the abdomen, delivers tiny electrical impulses to the sphincter muscle between the esophagus and the stomach. The jolts open the muscle for swallowing but close it other times to prevent reflux. In a recent clinical trial in Chile, all patients could stop daily heartburn drugs, and more than three quarters saw esophageal acid levels drop by more than half. The device is currently approved in Europe; the manufacturer plans for a clinical trial here by the end of 2013.

Source: EndoStim, The Hague, Netherlands, endostim.com

Walking for Stroke Recovery

A piece of shoe foam might help stroke patients regain their footing faster. A small pilot study found that those who wore an insole under the heel on their unaffected side (while they received standard physical therapy) increased their walking speed by 30 percent and could bear more weight on their weakened side after only two weeks, a big improvement compared with those patients who got only therapy. The foam insole helps shift a patient's weight to her weaker side, thus helping her regain balance and muscle strength.

Source: Alexander Aruin, PhD, professor of physical therapy and director of the Knecht Movement Science Laboratory, University of Illinois at Chicago

Regina Nuzzo

ILLUSTRATION BY PETER AND MARIA HOEY

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How high is **TOO** high a **fever?**

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EDITED BY BETH DREHER

INSPIRATION

Life Lessons from a Hospice Chaplain

Listen closely and you will hear what terminal patients have foremost in their minds. It's not what you think.

BY KERRY EGAN

FROM cnn.com

SHANNON TAGGART

As a 26-year-old student at Harvard Divinity School, I had just begun working as a student chaplain at a cancer hospital when my professor asked me about my work.

"I talk to the patients," I told him.

"What do people who are sick and dying talk to the student chaplain about?" he asked.

"Mostly we talk about their families," I responded.

"Do you talk about God?

"Not usually."

"Or their religion?"

"Not so much."

"The meaning of their lives?"

"Sometimes."

"And prayer? Do you lead them in prayer?"

"Sometimes," I said. "But not usually, not really."

I felt derision creeping into the professor's voice. "So you visit people and talk about their families?"

"They talk," I said. "I mostly listen."

A week later, I sat in a large lecture hall as the same professor told a packed room the story about a student he once met—me—who was a chaplain intern at a hospital.

"And I asked her, 'What exactly do you do as a chaplain?' And she replied, 'Well, I talk to people about their families.'" He paused for effect. "That was this student's understanding of faith!"

The students laughed.

"I thought to myself," he continued, "that if I were ever sick and dying in the hospital, the last person I would ever want to see is some Harvard Divinity School student chaplain wanting to talk to me about my family."

My body went numb with shame. I thought, Maybe, if I were a better chaplain, I would know how to talk to people about big spiritual questions. Maybe if dying people met with a good, experienced chaplain, they would talk about God like they were supposed to.

Today, 13 years later, I am a hospice chaplain. I visit people who are dying—in their homes, in hospitals, in nursing homes. And if you were to ask me the same question—What do people who are sick and dying talk about with the chaplain?—without hesitation or uncertainty, I would give you the same answer.

Mostly they talk about their families: about their mothers and fathers, their sons and daughters.

They talk about how they learned what love is, and what it's not. They talk about the love they felt, and the love they gave. Often they talk about love they did not receive, or the love they did not know how to offer, the love they withheld, or the love they maybe never felt for the ones they should have loved unconditionally.

And sometimes, when they are actively dying, fluid gurgling in their throats, they reach their hands out to things I cannot see, and they call out to their parents: Mama, Daddy, Mother.

People talk to me about family because that is how we talk about God.

What I did not understand when I was a student is that people talk to the chaplain about their families because that is how we talk about God. That is how we talk about the meaning of our lives.

Family is where we first experience love and where we first give it. It's probably the first place we've been hurt by someone we love, and hopefully the place we learn that love can overcome even the most painful rejection.

We don't have to use the words of theology to talk about God. People who are close to death almost never do. We should learn from those who are dying that the best way to teach our children about God is by loving each other wholly and forgiving each other fully. ■

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LIST

A Navy Wife's Favorite Phrases

Military lingo gets new life on the home front

BY HEATHER SWEENEY

FROM **spousebuzz.com**

Some of the slang my husband uses on the ship comes in handy at home. Five of the most useful terms:

1. Bravo Zulu, or "BZ"

That's militaryspeak for "well done," and it sounds so much cooler.

2. Mandatory Fun

A good term for that company picnic or holiday party that you've been strongly encouraged to attend. This phrase is best used in the privacy of your home.

3. ... and a Wake-up

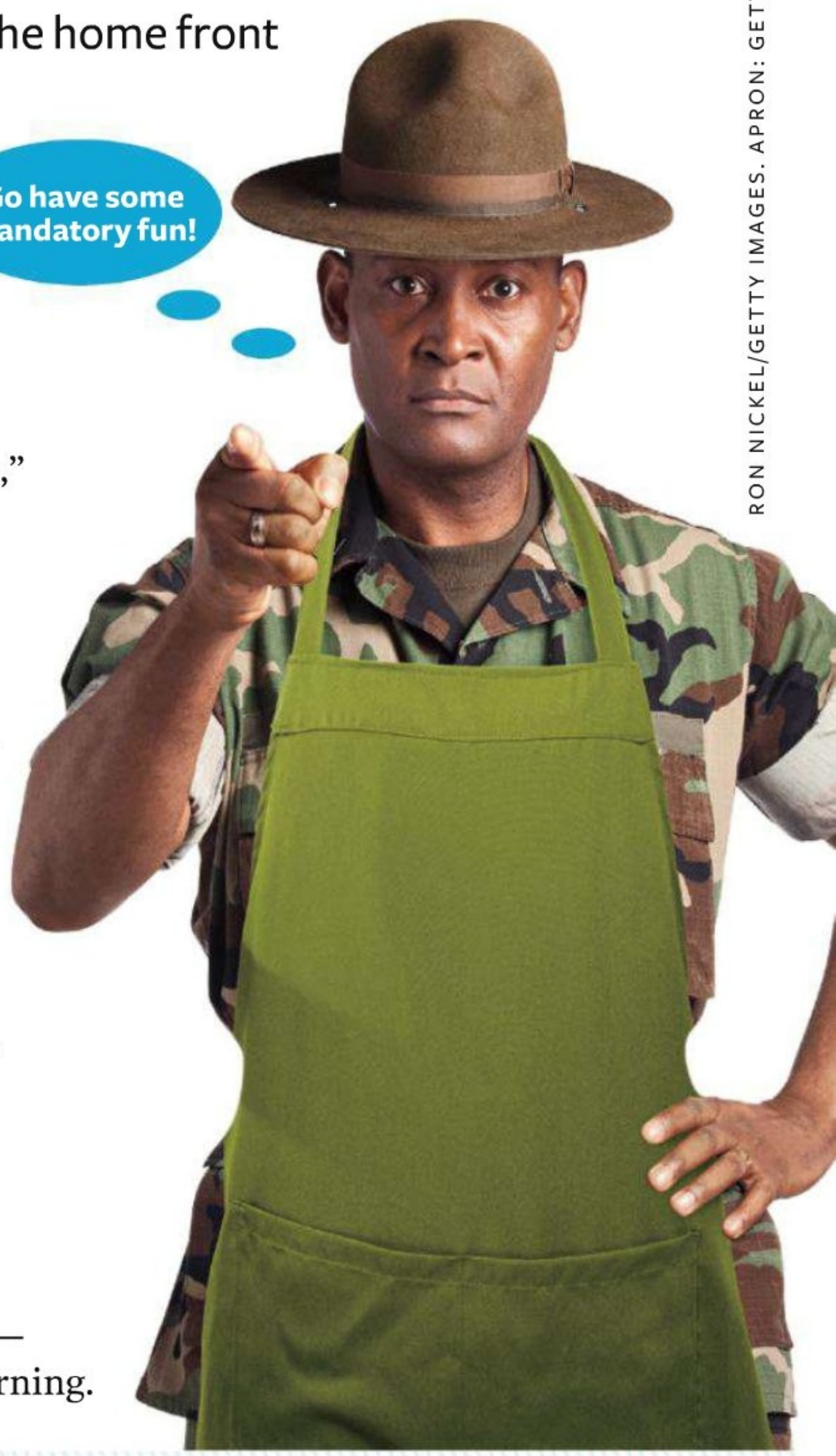
As in, "Dad will be home in four days and a wake-up!" That makes it sound so much more manageable than five days.

4. Got Your Six

Simply put, "I've got your back."

5. Zero Dark Thirty

My daughter's favorite time of day—really, really, really early in the morning.



RON NICKEL/GETTY IMAGES. APRON: GETTY IMAGES

QUOTABLE QUOTE

"My wife says I never listen to her. At least I think that's what she said." AUTHOR UNKNOWN

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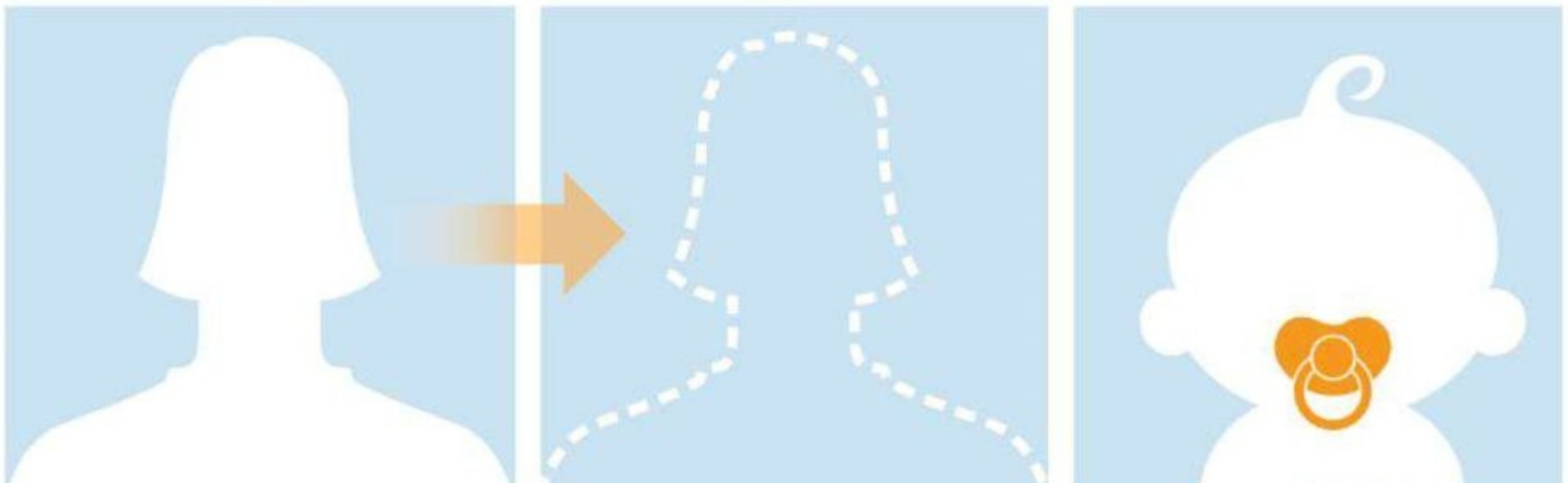

ARGUMENT STARTER

Facebook's Missing Moms

BY KATIE ROIPHE ● FROM *In Praise of Messy Lives*

"We have over-devoted ourselves to our children," says Roiphe.

It's a troubling trend: You click on a friend's name on Facebook, and what comes into focus is not a photograph of her but of a sleeping blond four-year-old or a sun-hatted toddler on the beach. Where have all these women gone?

Many of them work, attend book clubs, are involved in causes. But this is how they choose to represent themselves. The choice may seem trivial, but I think the photos signal a larger and more ominous self-effacement, a narrowing of worlds.

Facebook, of course, traffics in exhibitionism: It is a way of presenting your life, at least those sides of it you cherry-pick for the outside world, for show. One's children are arguably one's most important achievement, but that doesn't mean that they are who you are. It could, of course, be argued that the vanity of a younger generation, with their status postings on what kind of tea they are drinking, represents a worse or more sinister kind of narcissism. But this particular form of narcissism, these cherubs trotted out to create a picture of self, is to me more disturbing for the truth it tells. The subliminal equation is clear: I am my children.

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Reader Responses:

"Finally! Someone else in the world thinks this whole 'baby is me on Facebook' is as weird and unhealthy as I do." *KSB*

"I'm a lot of things, including someone who posts pix of my kids as my profile. They are a wonderful part of my life, and FB is just one part of that life as well." *prof2*

"Women are disappearing behind their children. It's sad and alarming." *Manerva*

"Why would a woman put a picture of her child's face? Because she loves her child." *Red Star*

Source: financialtimes.com

ILLUSTRATION BY JASON LEE

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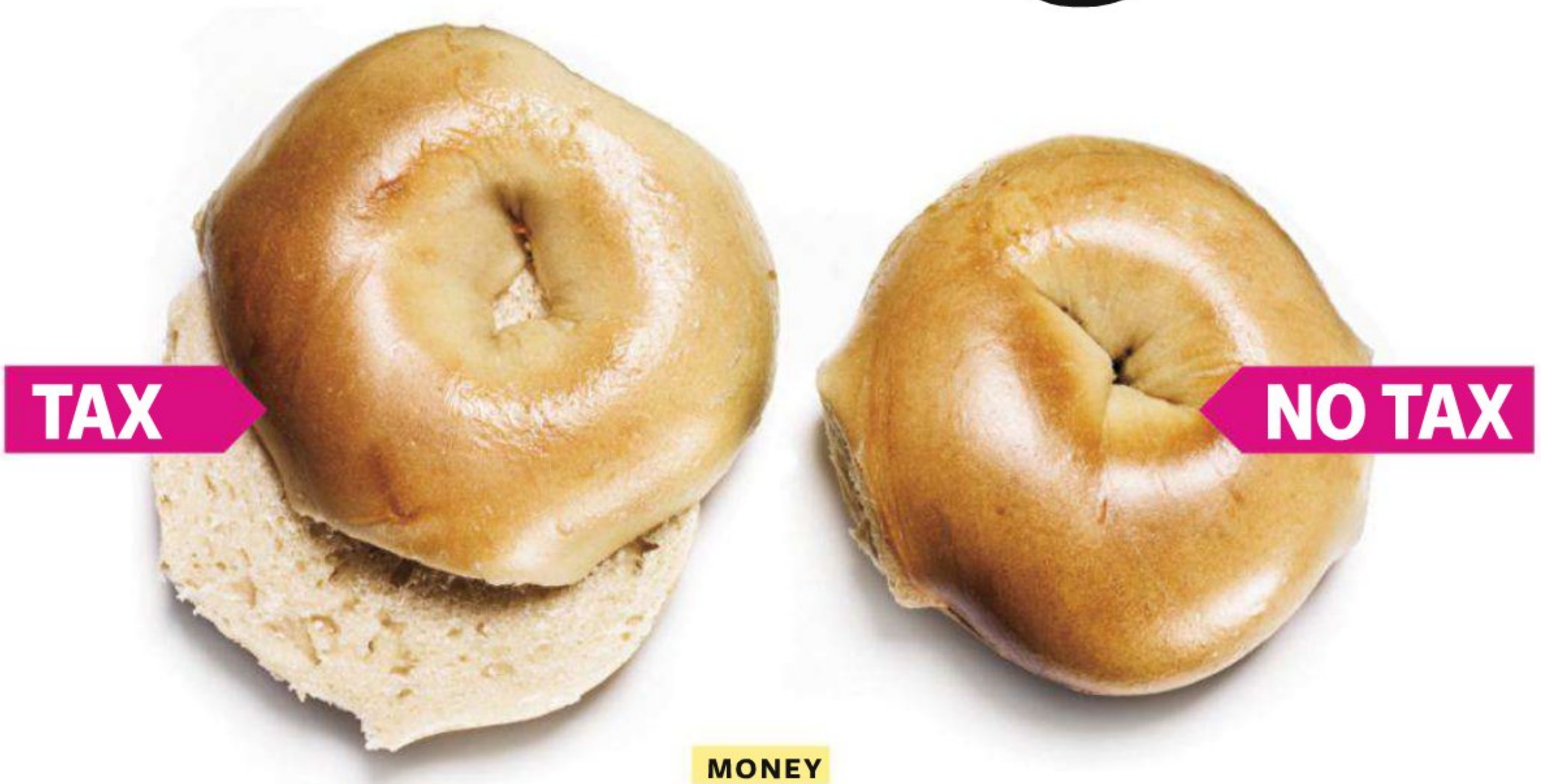

MONEY

There's a Tax for That

Sneaky state taxes that slip under the radar

Bagels in New York

If the bagel is sliced or prepared in some way, you'll be taxed. If it's not, you won't be taxed. If you eat it in the store, it's taxed no matter what. Got it? Good.

Balloon Rides in Kansas

A law in *Wizard of Oz* country states that romantic rides are considered a form of air transportation and are tax free. However, if the balloon is tethered for riders to take in the scenery, the trip is considered a form of entertainment and is taxed.

Tattoos and Piercings in Arkansas

Few heavy metal bands emerge from the Natural State. And why would they? A 6 percent tax is levied on body piercings and tattoos.

Candy in Illinois

Sweet-toothed shoppers were not happy when the Prairie State legislature raised sales tax on candy from 1 percent to 6.25 percent in September 2009. But don't worry: Twix, Butterfinger, and Kit Kat are exempt—they contain flour and are considered food, not candy.

Playing Cards in Alabama

Attention, all poker players: For each deck of playing cards you purchase in Alabama, you will be subject to a tax of 10 cents. The seller, though, pays $4 annually for licenses to sell the decks.

FOOD STYLIST: MATT VOHR FOR HALLEY RESOURCES

PHOTOGRAPH BY TRAVIS RATHBONE

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Eagle and Timberwolf battle for the presidency in 1992.

QUIZ

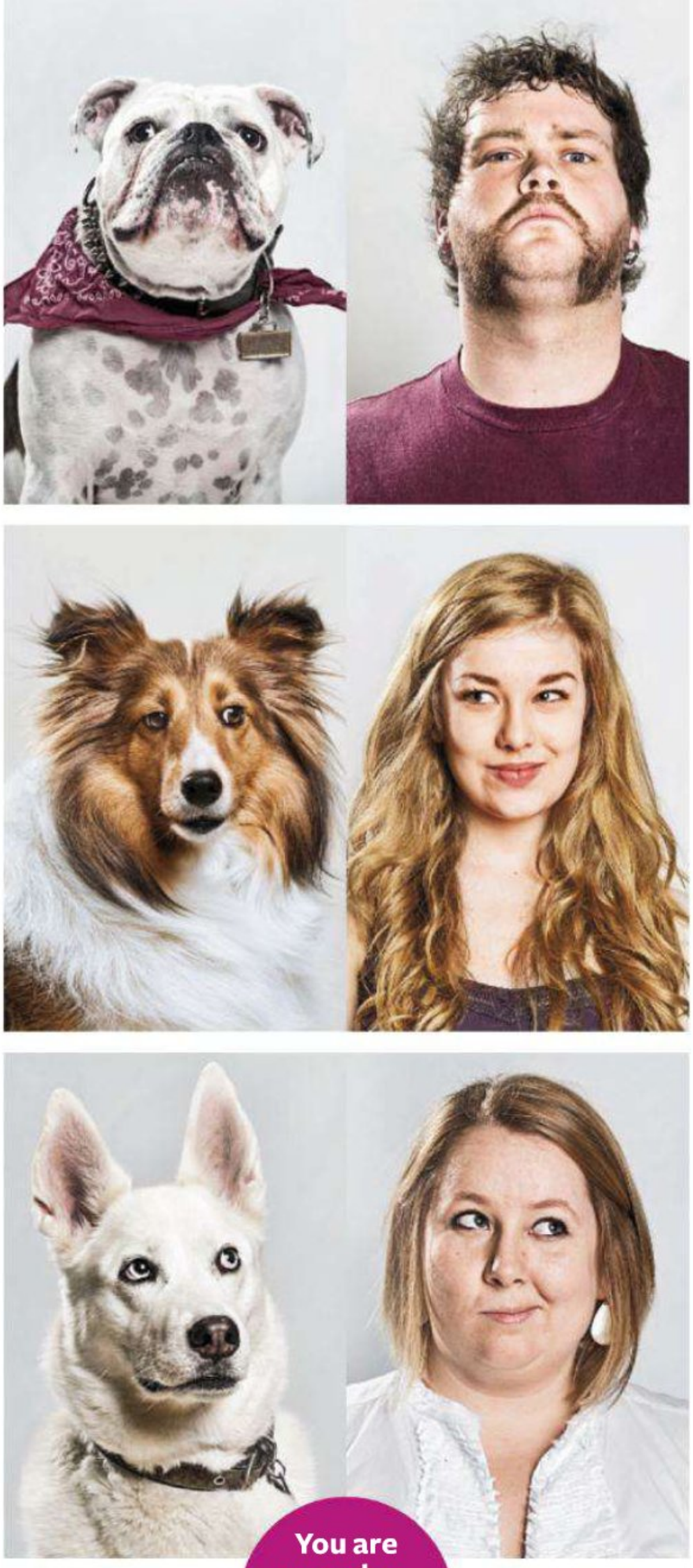
Guess the Secret Service Code Name

Do you remember when Searchlight resigned in 1974? How about when Eagle ran against Timberwolf? We didn't think so. Match presidents, candidates, and their family members with their Secret Service nicknames:

ANSWERS:
1, C; 2, Q; 3, K; 4, S; 5, D; 6, J; 7, R; 8, E; 9, P; 10, N; 11, F; 12, B; 13, L; 14, M; 15, O; 16, H; 17, T; 18, A; 19, G; 20, I

1) DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER	A) Javelin
2) JOHN F. KENNEDY	B) Tumbler
3) JACQUELINE KENNEDY	C) Scorecard
4) JOHN F. KENNEDY, JR.	D) Searchlight
5) RICHARD NIXON	E) Timberwolf
6) RONALD REAGAN	F) Evergreen
7) NANCY REAGAN	G) Denali
8) GEORGE H. W. BUSH	H) Rosebud
9) BARBARA BUSH	I) Angler
10) BILL CLINTON	J) Rawhide
11) HILLARY CLINTON	K) Lace
12) GEORGE W. BUSH	L) Tempo
13) LAURA BUSH	M) Renegade
14) BARACK OBAMA	N) Eagle
15) MICHELLE OBAMA	O) Renaissance
16) SASHA OBAMA	P) Snowbank
17) MALIA OBAMA	Q) Lancer
18) MITT ROMNEY	R) Rainbow
19) SARAH PALIN	S) Lark
20) DICK CHENEY	T) Radiance

ILLUSTRATION BY JOE CIARDIELLO



You are your dog, according to one study.

SUE BIRD (4)

PSYCHOLOGY

What Your Dog Says About You

It's no coincidence that some people are just like their dogs. Researchers in Bath, England, conducted an online survey of 1,000 dog owners and found that certain human personality traits link to specific canines. The research claims that if you own a German shepherd, you're most likely outgoing. Got a golden retriever? Odds are you're conscientious. A Chihuahua? Research says you're agreeable. "It seems likely that personality types are subconsciously drawn to certain breeds," reported study author Lance Workman in a British Psychological Society news release. The study indicates that you may be able to predict someone's personality based on his or her dog of choice. Of course, lifestyle plays a part too. For example, according to Workman, more active individuals are better suited to athletic, pastoral breeds such as border collies, while those who are considered emotionally stable might be suited to hound dogs such as beagles or greyhounds.

Source: HealthDay

SAVVY SAVER

5 Money Resolutions to Make Right Now

Fattening your wallet may be easier than dropping those extra pounds this year

BY JOAN RAYMOND

Try to pay down those credit cards, which average over 14% interest.

I Won't Throw Food Money Out with the Trash

The average American family of four tosses out about $2,275 worth of food every year, according to a 2012 study by the National Resources Defense Council. Planning weekly meals, buying from bulk bins at amounts you need, and avoiding impulse buys and marketing gimmicks (like two-for-one deals on items your family doesn't even like) will reduce costs and food waste. You can safely eat most foods past

"sell by" and "use by" dates, which are manufacturer suggestions, aren't federally regulated, and don't indicate safety (except on certain baby foods). Freeze fresh produce and leftovers. If you can't abide leftovers, be smart about portion control. The NIH Portion Distortion site offers great tips.

I'll Keep Better Tax Records

Forget that shoebox full of paper. Try shoeboxed.com instead to digitize receipts and store them online. Go right to the source with the IRS2Go (irs.gov) app, which offers tax-prep tips and tools—issued daily during tax-filing season. Idonatedit .com stores pictures of donated goods, estimates their value, keeps a running total, and lets you e-mail it to your accountant.

I'll Stop Wasting Health-Care Dollars

Don't think you can't save money on health care, because you can. Make the most of your insurance by staying in network. And don't skimp on screenings, immunizations, and other services your plan may provide, like discounted gym memberships and wellness classes. Use generic drugs whenever possible. Ask your doctor if an outpatient procedure can be scheduled at an ambulatory surgical center instead of a hospital. Take advantage of flexible spending accounts, which allow employees to set aside a portion of earnings to pay for qualified medical expenses. The money isn't subject to payroll taxes, but you have to use it in the calendar year, or else you lose it.

I'll Be a Smarter Shopper

Technology can make you a magna cum laude shopper. Apps like the one at couponsherpa.com mean no clipping (unless you want to—it offers printable coupons too). Redlaser.com's app uses bar codes to help you compare prices at nearby stores as well as online. Shopsavvy .com, also bar code driven, lets you compare prices and deals, too, as well as access customer reviews, tips, and coupon codes. If you're shopping for electronics, the Decide app (decide.com) tells you the best time to buy that flat-screen TV. And gasbuddy.com will find you the best price per gallon near your location.

I'll Make a Budget and Stick to It

Consider a zero-based budget, in which every dollar of income is earmarked for specific outlays, such as mortgage, food, savings, and entertainment. Every month, income minus outgo equals zero. Folks who use zero-based budgeting pay off 19 percent more debt and save 18 percent more bucks than those who don't, according to Dave Ramsay, author of *The Total Money Makeover*. Budget extra for groceries the first few months (you spend more than you think). For help, try sites like mint.com, buxfer.com, and schwabmoneywise.com.

ZACHARY SCOTT/GETTY IMAGES

Sources: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware, money.cnn.com, time.com, dailyfinance.com, govtech.com, bankrate.com

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PRICE DECODER

Why a Sports Ticket Costs What It Costs

BY CAITLIN O'CONNELL

FOOTBALL

College $100–$3,000

Shorter schedules and fewer home games than the pros increase demand.

- Ticket prices drop after two losses, as a team's major bowl hopes fade. The Michigan Wolverines, for instance, started the 2012 season with an average ticket price of $185.20. After their second loss, the price fell to $121.27.
- Rivalries are a factor in championship ticket prices, which can reach $3,000. When Alabama and LSU met last year, the average price was $1,918.32.

NFL $100–$5,000

Despite falling attendance (due to HDTV and other tech) ticket prices rise yearly.

- Teams play only eight regular-season home games, so demand exceeds supply, says Chris Matcovich of tiqiq.com.
- Winning teams can charge more. At 5–1, the Chicago Bears got an average of $418.19; the 3–3 Miami Dolphins, $148.78.
- America's priciest sports event draws corporate types better able than regular fans to buy tickets at exorbitant prices.

BASKETBALL

College $5–$500

More regular-season games and tournament play translate to much lower ticket prices compared with college football.

- In 2011, the average price to see perennial power UConn was $57.76. However, prices will fluctuate based on rivalries.
- Ticket prices jump for March Madness, but with 68 teams playing, early rounds are a bargain (as low as $81.15) compared with the Final Four, which last year had an average ticket price of $493.41.

NBA $10–$3,000

Last year's lockout lead to fewer but costlier games. A full 2012–13 schedule means a 7.8 percent price drop across the league.

- The star-packed L.A. Lakers have a high average price of $361.93, and wealthy local fans are happy to pay it.
- After the Oklahoma City Thunder lost to Miami in the 2011 NBA Finals (in which the top price was $925.40), the team's average ticket price dropped 11.4 percent, to $163.95.

FROM LEFT: KEVORK DJANSEZIAN/GETTY IMAGES. EVANS CAGLAGE/CORBIS

BY ROSS CLARK

Breaking News

Human Body Inspires New Cane

First Cane to Mimic Body's Natural Movement

Despite a rapidly aging population and giant leaps in medical technology, today's walking canes are eerily similar to canes from 2,000 years ago. Until now.

The Science of Stability

Inventors have finally propelled the walking cane into the modern era. How? By taking vital cues from the most advanced machine on earth: the human body. Called the "all-terrain HurryCane,™" it mimics the body's natural movement.

Older Canes Dangerous?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revealed a startling fact: 47,000 seniors end up in emergency rooms due to a fall while using a cane or walker – every year. This news has sparked fears over typical canes and walkers.

The Ultimate Design

"That's why we modeled the freestanding HurryCane™ after the human body," says lead designer Michael Stave. "We may be getting older, but that doesn't mean we need to slow down."

TheHURRYCANE®
The all-terrain cane

"I was immobile. The HurryCane™ gave me my life back. It's a god-send for folks like me."

- Gwendolyn P.

Unlock a Historically Low Price
Our Best Deal Ever!
PLUS FREE SHIPPING

promo code: MZ91

Package Includes:

- The HurryCane™
- Certificate of Authenticity
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- Travel Bag

TheHurryCane.com
or call **1-800-777-9395**

60 DAY 100% MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

Supplies are limited (2 per household).
Your HurryCane™ comes with a full 60-day Money Back Guarentee. If you are not completely convinced that the HurryCane™ truly stands alone in the world of inferior canes, you'll receive a full refund; return postage may be required.

SECURITY

How Not to Get Hacked

Five tips to help protect your life online

73
Percentage of Web users who have been victims of cybercrimes such as hacking

If you send e-mail, post updates on Facebook, check your bank account balance online, or do most anything that requires the Internet, you're at risk of being hacked. In fact, last August, Mat Honan, senior writer for tech magazine *Wired*—someone presumably well aware of the dangers of hacking—got hacked. He lost data from his iPhone, iPad, and MacBook, including all photos of his one-year-old daughter. "My entire digital life was destroyed," he wrote on wired.com. Luckily, embracing the Luddite lifestyle isn't your only option. These five simple steps can greatly reduce your chances of being hacked.

1 Be aware of what you share You don't have to delete your Facebook or Twitter account to stay safe, but posting birth dates, graduation years, or your mother's maiden name—information often used to answer security questions to

RICHARD DRURY/GETTY IMAGES

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access your accounts online or over the phone—on social-media sites makes a hacker's job even easier.

2 Pick a strong password

It can take a hacker's computer only ten minutes to guess a password made up of six lowercase letters, but free websites such as safepasswd.com can help you create a nearly uncrackable password with uppercase letters, symbols, and numbers. Using phrases as passwords works well too (the website passphra.se can help you create them). The phrase "say no to hackers," for instance, would theoretically take a hacker thousands of years to guess—until now, that is.

3 Use two-step verification

Facebook and Gmail have an optional security feature that, once activated, requires you to enter two passwords—your normal password plus a code that the companies text to your phone—to access your account. "The added step is a slight inconvenience that's worth the trouble when the alternative can be getting hacked," says CNET technology writer Matt Elliott. To set up the verification on Gmail, click on Account, then Security. On Facebook, log in, click on the down icon next to Home, and then click on Account Settings, Security, and finally Login Approvals.

4 Use Wi-Fi hot spots sparingly

T-Mobile and AT&T, the largest providers of free public wireless Internet (the kind often available in coffee shops, airports, and hotels), don't require encryption of data traveling between laptops and the Internet, which means any information—your e-mail password, your bank account balance—is vulnerable to hackers. In Windows, right-click on the wireless icon in the taskbar to turn it off. On a Mac, click the Wi-Fi icon in the menu bar to turn off Wi-Fi.

5 Back up your data

Hackers can delete years' worth of e-mails, photos, documents, and music from your computer in minutes. Protect your digital files by using a simple and free backup system available on websites such as crashplan.com and dropbox.com.

Sources: CNET, Lifehacker, NPR, ABC

For tips on what to do if you've been hacked, go to rd.com/january.

YOU MAY HAVE BEEN HACKED IF ...

- The name or password you use to log in to your computer or access e-mail or Facebook or other websites doesn't work.
- The appearance of your desktop is different, or your browser homepage has changed.
- Your computer is suddenly running slowly, or you're barraged with pop-up advertisements.
- Your friends or coworkers report receiving messages that you didn't send.

Source: ehow.com

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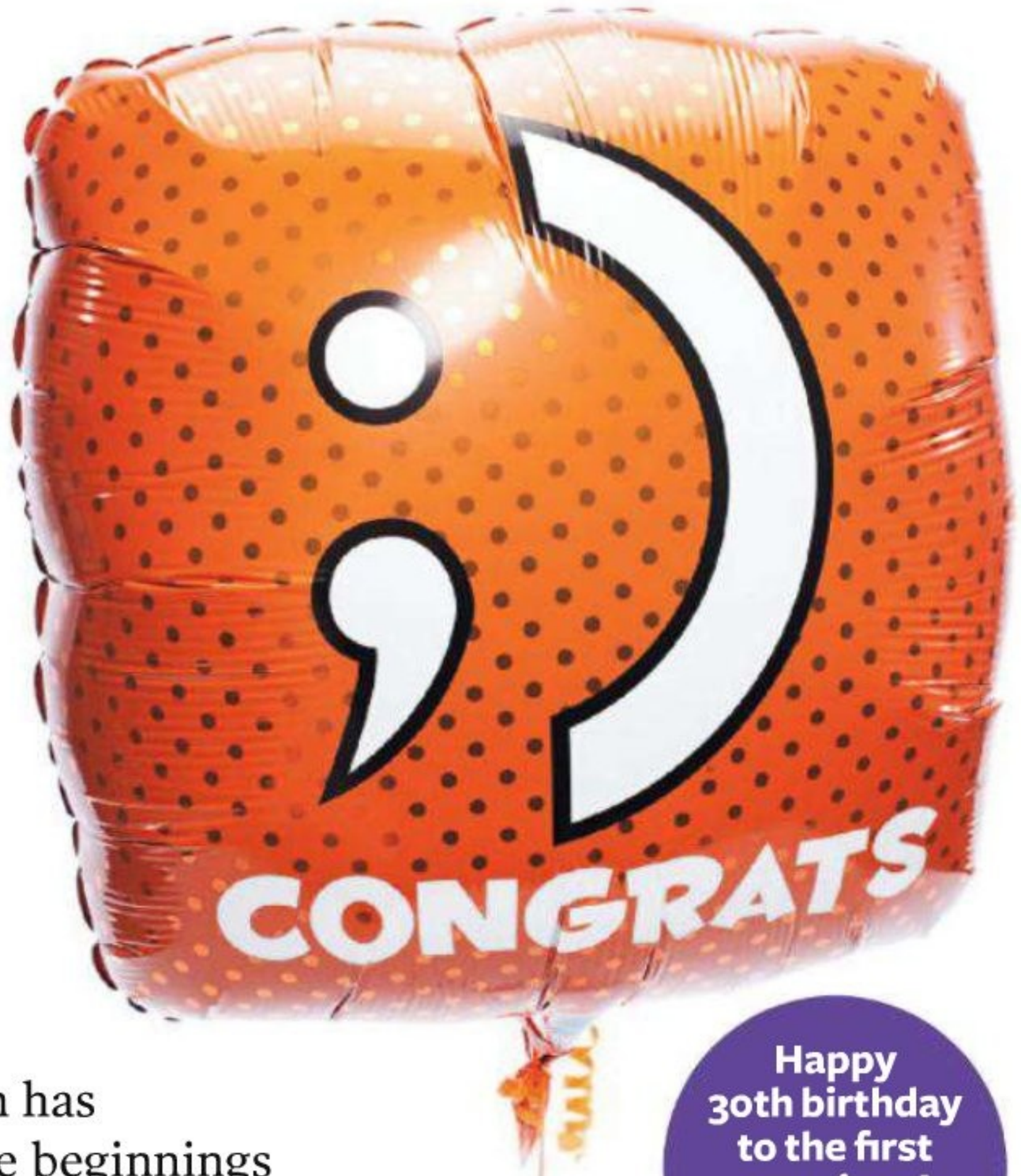
ANNIVERSARY

The Changing Face of Emoticons



Happy 30th birthday to the first emoticon! [iii]

On September 19, 1982, Carnegie Mellon computer science professor Scott Fahlman, perhaps recognizing e-mail's lack of nuance, sent a message to friends: "I propose the following character sequences for joke markers: :-) Read it sideways." The emoticon has come a long way from its humble beginnings more than three decades ago. Source: digitalspy.com

Here's a look at the evolution:

:) :-D

Typographic smiley faces began in the 1980s.

By the 1990s, AOL AIM had introduced symbols for yelling, kissing, and more.

Icons on Skype range from bandit to foul-mouth.

The iPhone iOS 6 offers more than 450 emoticons.

FROM TOP: PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA SCOTT. EVERETT COLLECTION

WEBSITE WE LOVE

WhatMovieShouldIWatchTonight.com

Sigourney Weaver in *Alien*, 1979

Despite the lengthy URL, this site is refreshingly simple. Click on a movie category, from Classics to Criminals, then sit back and watch one of 350 trailers that the site chooses at random. Click the image to skip to the next preview. The movie trailers play in your browser in a large format with no distracting flashing ads, but you'll have to go to another site such as Netflix to find the entire film. Creator Kevin Yaun filled WMSIWT with movies he loves: "I was tired of other overwhelming movie-preview sites, so I created a website to make it easier."

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PRICE DECODER

Why Earbuds Cost What They Cost

A tech expert explains

BY ROB PEGORARO

Beats Tour $149.99

- Available in two colors with a prominent "b" logo
- Includes silicone ear cushions in seven sizes
- Comes with carrying case
- Good sound quality, including strong bass output
- Built-in microphone and remote control for switching between phone and music player
- One-year limited warranty
- "Made for iPod" licensing agreement

JVC Gumy $7.95

- Available in eight colors
- Made in China
- One-size-fits-all rubber earbuds
- Simple, plastic packaging
- Poor sound quality; weak bass output
- No remote control, carrying case, or other accessories
- Thin 3.3-foot cord likely to tangle
- One-year limited warranty

Beats Tour earbuds, endorsed by rapper Dr. Dre, have a 4.2-foot cord that resists tangles.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA SCOTT

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"Treat your password like your toothbrush. Don't let anyone else use it, and get a new one every six months." CLIFFORD STOLL

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All in a Day's Work

A customer complained about receiving calls from international telemarketers. I asked why she thought they were international.

"Because," she said, "the caller ID says it's coming from the District of Columbia."

From reddit.com

"Huggins, our goal is to go green, so we're replacing you with this plant."

Work Jerks

Meetingboy.com offers a running commentary about the workplace. Some of the best:

- Thanks for the voice mail about the e-mail you sent. If you send me another e-mail about the voice mail, then we'll complete the circle of life.
- A group of lions is called a pride, a group of crows is called a murder, and a group of buzzwords is called a PowerPoint presentation.
- We suspected the boss wasn't reading things, so we gave him a report on top of ten blank sheets. Came back with a comment: "Looks good."
- Every few minutes, someone joins the call late, and the leader brings them up to speed. It's like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat," but more tedious.

Soon after my accident, I went back to the classroom wearing a plaster cast round my chest that couldn't be seen under my shirt.

One day, I was having trouble reining in my rowdy tenth-grade class. Making matters worse, a stiff

ILLUSTRATION BY H. L. SCHWADRON

ACTING SECRETS REVEALED

"When you do Shakespeare, they think you must be intelligent because they think you understand what you're saying."

Actress *Helen Mirren*

breeze coming from an open window kept blowing my tie into my face. That, at least, I could control: I stapled the tie onto my plaster cast.

It worked. The pupils' mouths fell open. For the rest of the day, I had no trouble from any of them.

Paul Maddocks, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, England

A waiter at our diner was called over by his customer.

"Can you take this dish back?" the customer asked. "I don't like it."

"I'm sorry. What's wrong with it?" asked the waiter.

"It's the hash browns. They taste like potatoes."

Tia Balcom, Spokane Valley, Washington

The client had a reputation for not paying his bills, but my brother-in-law, George, took the handyman's job anyway. And when he finished, sure enough, he left with a promise that the check would be in the mail soon. Days later, no check, but he did get called back by the client, who complained of an awful smell coming from the den.

"I have an idea what it might be," said George. "But before I do anything, I need to be paid for the first job."

Desperate, the man paid him on the spot. With that, George walked over to the fireplace and pulled out the dead fish he'd stashed there days earlier.

William Ludewig, Weirton, West Virginia

At the end of my missionary work, where I served as the village doctor, the people bid me a warm and tearful farewell.

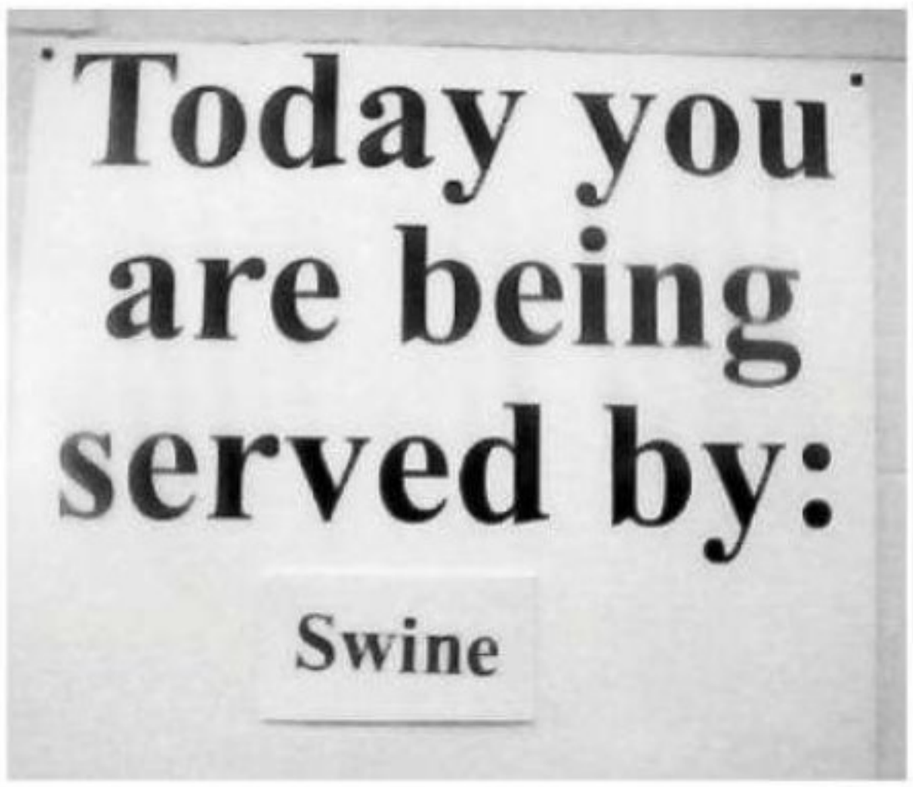
"Please don't go," an elderly villager pleaded.

Touched, I tried to reassure him. "Don't worry. You will soon get a much better doctor than me here."

"That's what the previous doctor told us."

Dr. A. Laxminarayana Rao, Kannur, India

FORGET THE RIBS, I'LL HAVE A SALAD



Spotted in a restaurant in Monroe, Indiana

COURTESY RACHEL ISCH/SIGNSPOTTING

Your favorite new joke, funny anecdote, or crazy news story might be worth $$$. **See page 64 for details.**

Ask Laskas

JEANNE MARIE LASKAS

Mega-Busy Mom

A friend of many, many years and I have been trying to get together. I like spending time with her, but between my job and my kids, I've had zero time for anyone else. Do I nicely explain that I just have no bandwidth right now? Or am I just vamping that I don't have time or use for the friendship anymore?

Reluctant Friend

Dear Reluctant,
Yeah, you've got no bandwidth right now. If the friendship means enough to both of you, it will survive your absence for a while. True friends can pick up where they left off after years of separation. If she needs more than you've got to offer during this stage, she'll have to look elsewhere. Be straight with her, and don't make promises you can't keep.

All Gifted Out!

My friend and I have been sending birthday and holiday gifts to each other's daughter since the girls were babies. The gift exchange has been fun, but our kids are in their 20s now, and I think the time has come to discontinue the practice. Is there a pleasant way to stop?

Losing Interest

Dear Losing,
You're right—it's time to wind up this tradition. You're done with the role of "cool friend of mom's," and so is she. For the daughter's next birthday, just send a card with a note inside saying how much you've enjoyed watching her grow up. I'm betting both she and her parents will get the message.

Jeanne Marie Laskas is not a shrink, but she does have uncommon sense.

ILLUSTRATION BY ISTVAN BANYAI

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Dress Code Concern

My coworker wears outfits that are three to four inches too short for her. She's about 40 years old, but besides that, it's just not appropriate office wear. How can I clue her in without creating an issue?

Offended Officemate

Dear Offended,
I'd recommend you adjust your offend-o-meter. Rather than expending energy judging this woman's hem, work harder so that you get promoted. Then, when you're the boss, you can come up with the dress code. Now get back to work.

Wallet Woes

I'm on a budget, but my friends always want to spend money—eating out, drinks, trips. They have fewer expenses than I do, so they don't worry as much. I have trouble saying no, because I want to spend time with them. How can I get them to do cheaper (or free) things without looking like a party pooper?

Making Ends Meet

Dear Meet,
Make plans for some affordable fun, and invite your fancy friends to join you. Even if they choose not to go, stick with your plan, and then tell everyone what a blast you had. After a while, either the fancies will start joining you on your awesome budget activities, or you will have learned to enjoy yourself without them—and without going broke.

YOUR WORDS OF WISDOM

In our November issue, we asked you to help Hurt Genetic Clone mend her strained relationship with her twin sister. You wrote:

The first thing to realize is that something is bothering your sister enough to make her act so moody. Give her the space she needs. She will change her behavior when she realizes she can relax around—and with—you. *Sandstar6981*

The world is divided into givers and takers—and it's not always genetic. You need to stop "doing a lot for her" and back off. When and if your sister asks why, tell her you have noticed she is moody and preoccupied, and you didn't want to add any pressure. Say "I love you" and that you're ready to listen when and if she wants to talk about it. *Camilla Smith*

GIVE YOUR BEST ADVICE

Write your answer to this problem at rd.com/january.

My hairdresser of 20 years had an accident and hasn't been able to work. So I've been seeing another stylist in the same salon. She's doing a better job and is less expensive. When my former stylist comes back, how do I tell her I want to stay with my new stylist? *Worried Client*

Send questions about manners, parents, partners, or office politics to advice@rd.com. Sending gives us permission to edit and publish.

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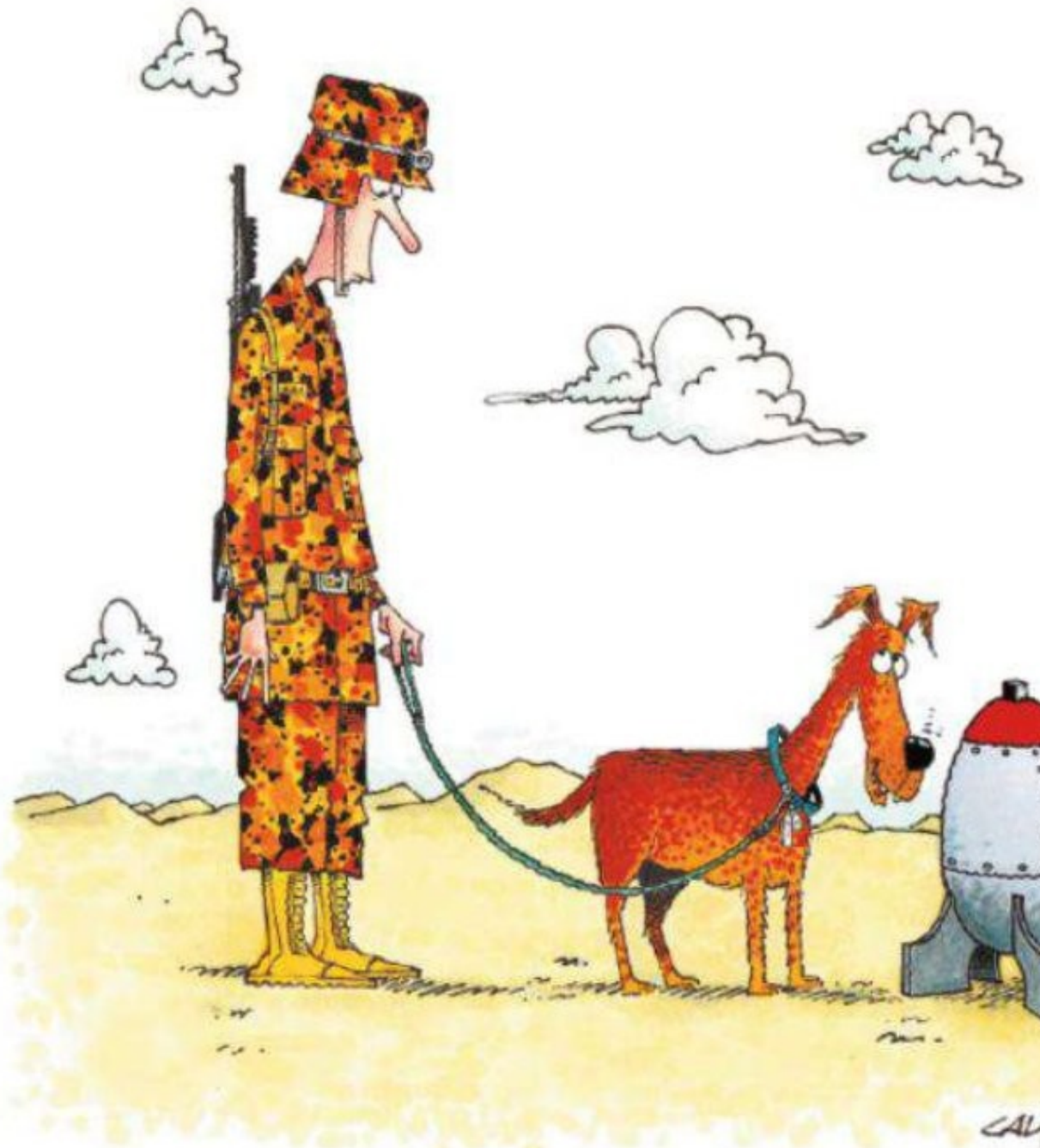
Humor in Uniform



"I'm getting overtones of potassium nitrate, with just a hint of sulfur."

The five-year-old boy at our school was from a military family: His mother was a fighter pilot, and his father served in Afghanistan.

"Do you know my full name?" he asked me.

"No, I don't," I said.

"It's James Phillip Thomas Steven Harold Jackson the Third. But my mother calls me Steven. My father's full name is James Phillip Thomas Steven Harold Jackson the Second."

"And what does your mother call him?"

"Cupcake."

M. Jackson, Montgomery, Alabama

As we set out on patrol in Afghanistan, my platoon leader was torn between which route to take.

"One road will probably get us ambushed," he said. "But if we take the second, we'll likely run into IEDs. What do you think?"

I considered our options, then gave him my suggestion: "I say we take a couple of days off."

Ryan Hendricks, Kennesaw, Georgia

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN CALDWELL

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The Reads

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Crime page 110

Consumer page 128

ARTWORK BY SU BLACKWELL, PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHANNA PARKIN

WE'RE CALLING IT: 2013 is the year of hope, heart, and happiness. For this, the first in our special monthly series about optimism, we selected three of the best pieces on the subject: Journalist ***Fareed Zakaria***

The Year of

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highlights our progress, ***Michael J. Fox*** embraces the everyday, and ***Anna Quindlen*** urges us to cherish the moment. They remind us why it's never been a better time—for us, our nation, and our world.

Optimism

PHOTOGRAPHS BY YASU+JUNKO

THE YEAR OF Optimism

A JOURNALIST'S VIEW

This *Astonishing* Age by Fareed Zakaria

FROM HIS COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS **"We Live in an Age of Progress,"** *HARVARD GAZETTE,* MAY 24, 2012

Fareed Zakaria

Editor at large at *Time* and host of CNN's *Fareed Zakaria GPS*

MANY OF US HEAR OF A BOMB going off in Afghanistan or of a terrorist plot in this country and think we live in dangerous times. But the number of people who have died as a result of war, civil war, and terrorism is down 50 percent this decade from the 1990s. It is down 75 percent from the preceding five decades. The richest countries of the world are not in geopolitical competition with one another, fighting wars or proxy wars, or even engaging in arms races. The world we live in is at peace.

The political stability we have experienced has allowed the creation of a single global economic system, in which countries around the world are participating and flourishing. Even in the current period of slow growth, the global economy as a whole will grow 10 to 20 percent faster this decade than it did a decade ago, over 40 percent faster than it did two decades ago, and more than four times as fast as it did three decades ago.

The result: The United Nations estimates that poverty has been reduced more in the past 50 years than in the previous 500 years. And much of that reduction has taken place in the past

PROP STYLIST: SARA FOLDENAUER FOR KATE RYAN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KAGAN MCLEOD

20 years. Life expectancy across the world has risen dramatically. We gain five hours of life expectancy every day—without even exercising! A third of all the babies born in the developed world this year will live to be 100.

To understand the astonishing age of progress we are living in, just look at the cell phones in your pockets. They have more computing power than the *Apollo* space capsule. That capsule couldn't even tweet! So just imagine the opportunities that lie ahead. Moore's Law—[the idea] that computing power doubles every two years while costs drop—may be slowing down for computers, but it's accelerating in other fields, [including genetics]. A "Third Industrial Revolution," involving material science and the customization of manufacturing, is yet in its infancy.

America still has the largest and most dynamic economy in the world.

You might say, "This is all wonderful for the world at large, but what does it mean for America?" Well, for America and for most places, peace and broader prosperity—"the rise of the rest"—mean more opportunities. This is a country that still has the largest and most dynamic economy in the world, that dominates the age of technology, that hosts hundreds of the world's greatest companies, that houses its largest, deepest capital markets, and that has almost all the world's greatest universities. The United States is also a vital society, the only country in the industrialized world that is demographically vibrant. We add nearly 3,000,000 people every year. That itself is a powerful life force, made stronger by the fact that so many of these people are immigrants. They—I should say, we—come to this country with aspirations, hunger, drive, determination, and with a fierce love for America.

When I tell you we live in an age of progress, I am not urging complacency—far from it. We have had daunting challenges over the past 100 years: a depression, two world wars, the Cold War, 9/11, and a global economic crisis. But we have overcome them by our response. This country has its problems, but I would rather have America's problems than those of most any other place in the world.

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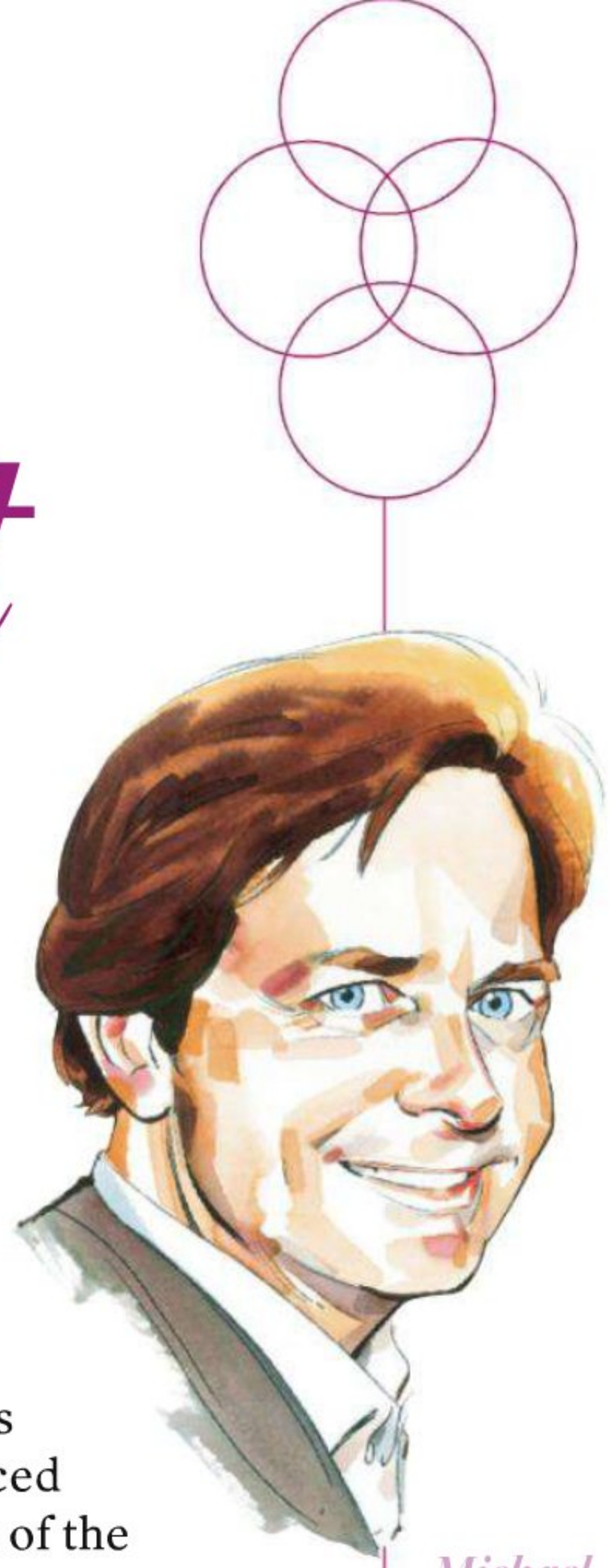
A SLICE OF LIFE

My *Bright* Mornings

by Michael J. Fox

FROM ***Always Looking Up***



Michael J. Fox
Actor, author, and activist

THIS MORNING MY WIFE, TRACY, IS ALREADY UP, dealing out breakfasts and readying the kids for school. I blindly fumble a plastic vial from the nightstand, dry-swallow a couple of pills, and then fall immediately into the first series of actions that, while largely automatic, demand a practiced determination. I swing my legs around to the side of the bed, and the instant my feet hit the floor, the two of them are in an argument. A condition called dystonia, a regular complement to Parkinson's disease, cramps my feet severely and curls them inward, pressing my ankles toward the floor and my soles toward each other as though they were about to close in prayer. I snake my right foot out toward the edge of the rug and toe-hook one of my hard leather loafers. I force my foot into the shoe, repeat the process with the left, and then cautiously stand up. Chastened by the unyielding confines of the leather, my feet begin to behave themselves. The spasms have stopped, but the aching will persist for the next 20 minutes or so.

First stop: the bathroom. I'll spare you the initial details of my visit, except to say that with Parkinson's, it is essential to put the seat up. Grasping the toothpaste is nothing compared with the effort it takes to coordinate the two-handed task of wrangling the toothbrush and strangling out a line of paste onto the

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bristles. By now, my right hand has started up again, rotating at the wrist in a circular motion, perfect for what I'm about to do. My left hand guides my right hand up to my mouth, and once the back of the Oral-B touches the inside of my upper lip, I let go. It's like releasing the tension on a slingshot and compares favorably to the most powerful state-of-the-art electric toothbrush on the market. With no off switch, stopping means seizing my right wrist with my left hand, forcing it down to the sink basin, and shaking the brush loose as though disarming a knife-wielding attacker. I can usually tell whether shaving is a good idea on any particular day, and this morning, like most, I decide it's too early to risk bloodshed. I opt for a quick pass with an electric stubble trimmer. *Miami Vice* lives.

I can usually tell whether shaving is a good idea. Today I decide it's too early to risk bloodshed.

A bench in the shower takes the pressure off my feet, and the steady drumbeat of the water on my back has a therapeutic effect, though if I sit here much longer, I might never get up. Getting dressed is made easier by the pills, which have begun to assert their influence. I avoid clothing with too many buttons or laces, though I'm still addicted to Levi's 501s, making me a fashion victim in the truest sense of the word. In lieu of proper brushing, I raise my twitching fingers up to my hairline and, raking it back, hope for the best. Executing a slow shuffle (my legs haven't yet earned my trust for the day), I make my way out to greet my family.

At the turn from our bedroom into the hallway, there is an old full-length mirror in a wooden frame. I can't help but catch a glimpse of myself as I pass. Turning fully toward the glass, I consider what I see. This reflected version of myself, wet, shaking, rumpled, pinched, and slightly stooped, would be alarming were it not for the self-satisfied expression pasted across my face. I would ask the obvious question: "What are you smiling about?" But I already know the answer: "It just gets better from here."

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A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Our *Great* Gift

by Anna Quindlen

FROM ***A Short Guide to a Happy Life***

Anna Quindlen

Novelist, journalist, winner of the Pulitzer Prize

IT IS AMAZING HOW MUCH YOU CAN LEARN in one year. Just like Paul, who was knocked off his mule into the dust on the way to Damascus, and discovered God, I had a rude awakening. I'm not sure I learned anything much about mortality, or death, or pain, or even love, although in the years since, I have found that that one horrible year has given me a perspective on all those things I wouldn't otherwise have had.

"Before" and "after" for me was not just before my mother's illness and after her death. It was the dividing line between seeing the world in black and white, and in Technicolor. The lights came on, for the darkest possible reason.

And I went back to school and I looked around at all the kids I knew who found it kind of a drag and who weren't sure if they could really hack it and who thought life was a bummer. And I knew that I had undergone a sea change. Because I was never again going to be able to see life as anything except a great gift.

It's ironic that we forget so often how wonderful life really is. We have more time than ever to remember it. The men and women of generations past had to work long, long hours to support lots and lots of children in tiny, tiny houses. The women worked in factories and sweatshops and then at home, too, with two bosses, the one who paid them, and the one they were married to, who didn't.

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There are new generations of immigrants now, who work just as hard, but those of us who are second and third and fourth generation are surrounded by nice cars, family rooms, patios, pools—the things our grandparents thought only rich people had. Yet somehow, instead of rejoicing, we've found the glass half empty. Our jobs take too much out of us and don't pay enough. We're expected to pick the kids up at preschool and run the microwave at home.

C'mon, let's be honest. We have an embarrassment of riches. Life is good.

Life is made up of moments, small pieces of glittering mica in a long stretch of gray cement.

I don't mean in any cosmic way. I never think of my life, or my world, in any big cosmic way. I think of it in all its small component parts: the snowdrops, the daffodils; the feeling of one of my kids sitting close beside me on the couch; the way my husband looks when he reads with the lamp behind him; fettuccine Alfredo; fudge; *Gone with the Wind*, *Pride and Prejudice*. Life is made up of moments, small pieces of glittering mica in a long stretch of gray cement. It would be wonderful if they came to us unsummoned, but particularly in lives as busy as the ones most of us lead now, that won't happen. We have to teach ourselves how to make room for them, to love them, and to live, really live.

I learned to live many years ago. Something really bad happened to me, something that changed my life in ways that, if I had had a choice, it would never have been changed at all. And what I learned from it is what, today, sometimes seems to be the hardest lesson of all.

I learned to love the journey, not the destination. I learned that this is not a dress rehearsal, and that today is the only guarantee you get.

I learned to look at all the good in the world and try to give some of it back, because I believed in it completely and utterly.

A SHORT GUIDE TO A HAPPY LIFE, COPYRIGHT © 2000 BY ANNA QUINDLEN, IS PUBLISHED AT $12.95 BY RANDOM HOUSE, INC., RANDOMHOUSE.COM.

The *American* Optimists

Six people who look on the bright side of life

SPIRITUAL ADVISER

Billy Graham, 94, Christian minister, says, "If I didn't have spiritual faith, I would be a pessimist. But I'm an optimist. I've read the last page in the Bible. It's all going to turn out all right."

EDUCATOR

School principal **Kenyetta Wilbourn,** 36, carried an aluminum bat through the hallways of Detroit's Denby High when she started there in 2009. Now, while the neighborhood is still troubled, Wilbourn has transformed Denby into a clean, calm center of learning. "This city is not the 'diamond in the rough'; it is the actual diamond," she says.

JOURNALIST

Katie Couric, 55, broadcaster and author, says, "Find the joy. When you feel it, let it wash over you. And take a moment to appreciate it. Be grateful for the people in your life, for waking up feeling good and pain free, and for the stretch of road ahead that's so full of possibilities. When you encounter bumps, keep going and don't look back."

POLITICIAN

Gabrielle Giffords, 42, the former congresswoman from Arizona, wrote the final chapter of her 2011 book, *Gabby: A Story of Courage and Hope,* in her own words: "Hope and faith. You have to have hope and faith ... Long ways to go. Grateful to survive. It's frustrating. Mentally hard. Hard work. I'm trying. Trying so hard to get better. Regain what I've lost ... I will get stronger. I will return."

SPORTS ENTHUSIAST

Grant DePorter, 48, a Chicago restaurateur and leading Chicago Cubs fan, is sticking by the team, which last won the World Series in 1908. "No one knows more about optimism than a Cubs fan. After waiting 104 years, it's our optimism, and not the winning, that binds us together. We really do believe the next year will be the year," he says.

BUSINESS LEADER

Former Google executive **Marissa Mayer,** 37, was named CEO of the struggling Internet giant Yahoo last August. She's the sixth person to hold the post in the past five years. "My view is that the core of Yahoo is incredibly valuable and a great platform to build on," she says. ■

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PERFECT TIMING

There are 24 hours in a day. Here's how to make the most of them.

BY KATHY BENJAMIN ● FROM *Mental Floss*

7 a.m.
Make a Baby!

If you want kids, your best bet is trying when you wake up—men's sperm counts are significantly higher in the early morning.

8:30 a.m.
Decide Something

Researchers have found that we make our best decisions right after we wake up. Later, we suffer from "decision fatigue" and make the quicker or easier decision.

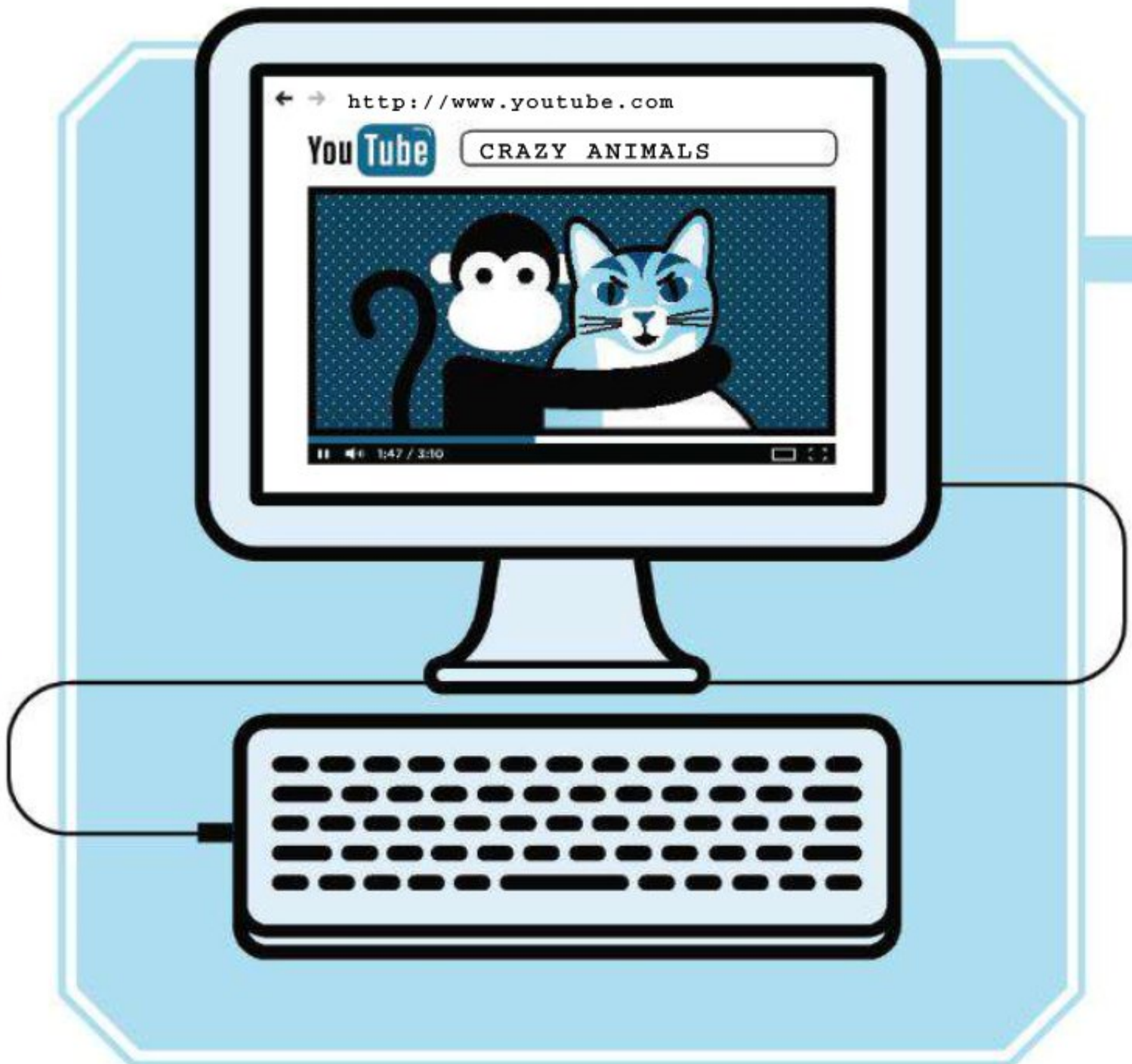
ILLUSTRATIONS BY HEADCASE DESIGN

10 a.m.
Take an Aspirin

Mornings, specifically Monday mornings, are the most common time for both heart attacks and migraines. A preemptive aspirin could ward off pain or even save your life.

11 a.m.
Send an E-mail

Analysis of more than 200 million e-mails found that people are most likely to read their mail shortly before their lunch break. Send one at 11 a.m. to be at the top of the pile.

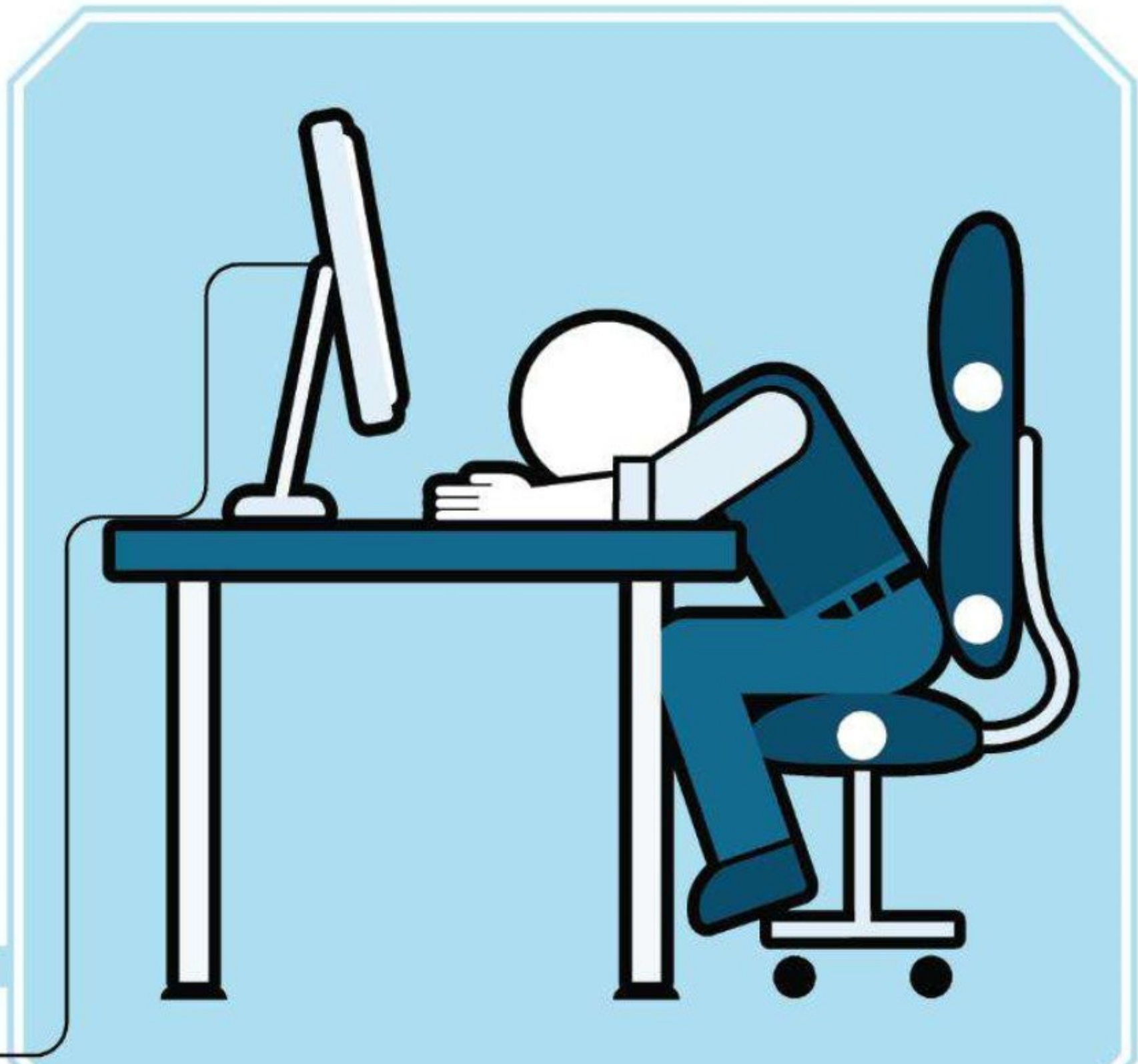


9:30 a.m.
Update Your Blog

Most Web surfers check their favorite sites before 10 a.m. If you want to maximize your blog's traffic, be sure to post shortly after breakfast.

1 p.m.
Watch a Funny YouTube Video

Researchers from Northeastern and Harvard, who studied 300 million tweets over three years, concluded that the national mood is at its lowest at 1 p.m. Why not chase away those early-afternoon blues with a video of a sneezing panda?



2 p.m.
Take a Power Nap

The post-lunch slump isn't just a symptom of a full belly; at around 2 p.m., your body temperature starts to drop the same way it does at night. Australian researchers found that a ten-minute power nap is the most effective way to combat the midafternoon blahs.

4 p.m.
Tweet Something Witty

If you come up with a 140-character zinger first thing in the morning, save it. A study conducted by social-media scientist Dan Zarrella found that Twitter users are most likely to retweet others' pithy comments between 3 p.m. and midnight, peaking between 4 and 5 p.m.

4:30 p.m.
Clean the House

It's best to clean when your hand-eye coordination is highest, around 4 to 5 p.m.

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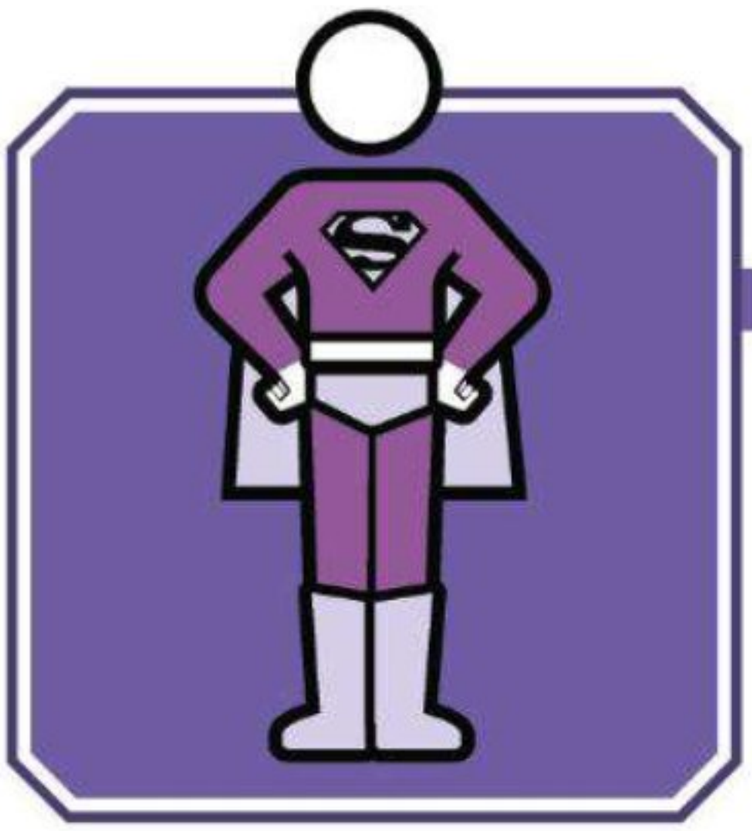
5 p.m.
Get Some Exercise

Your body temperature is highest from 5 to 6 p.m. The heat increases your stamina and strength while decreasing your reaction time, so the added warmth makes your workouts more effective.



10 p.m.
Solve the World's Problems

Difficult problems require creative thinking, and studies show that people do their most abstract thinking when they are tired. If you're not a night owl, letting your mind wander when you're worn-out might lead to a creative solution to a problem that seemed insurmountable at noon. ■

9 p.m.
Sell Something on eBay

According to eBay users, the best time to end an auction is 9 p.m. EST because people tend to surf the Web when they get home from work at night.

Drama in Real Life

IN 1972, KERRY LEE ALBRIGHT WAS SWEPT AWAY IN THE BUFFALO CREEK FLOOD. HIS MOTHER SAVED HIS LIFE—AND LOST HERS IN THE PROCESS. HIS STORY.

I Was the Miracle Baby

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Then (left) and now: Kerry Albright at Buffalo Creek

PHOTOGRAPH BY POON WATCHARA-AMPHAIWAN

BY MELODY WARNICK

trolling down a street near his Brooklyn, New York, apartment, wearing a polo shirt and jeans, his close-cropped hair masking a slight bald patch, 41-year-old Kerry Albright appears unassuming, almost ordinary. When he speaks, his sweet drawl pegs him as a Southerner, but he's without any small-town reserve. Instead, Kerry speaks with dramatic flair that shows off his 19 years in musical theater, performing on international stages. He's an avid Facebook user with 1,000 "friends" and regularly posts stories about his travels and other pastimes. "I'm one of those people who just want to hang out with friends and laugh," he says.

Until prompted, though, he says nothing about his childhood in the poverty-strangled coal-mining town of Lorado, West Virginia, and he owns but one photo of the golden-haired, angel-faced little boy he once was. Always at the back of his mind, however, is the catastrophe that claimed half his family and that he barely survived. He was too little to remember the event that earned him the nickname Miracle Baby.

Friday, February 25, 1972, dawned clear and beautiful, a blue-skied reprieve from the rain and snow that had been pelting the Buffalo Creek valley, a 17-mile-long basin nestled in the West Virginia foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, for weeks. Inside their white clapboard house in Lorado, 39-year-old Sylvia Albright hustled her son Steven, 17, out the door to the school bus, then turned her attention to baby Kerry Lee. At nine months old, he was just beginning to outgrow a nasty stretch of colic. Now that the sun was shining, maybe Sylvia could take the baby outside for a bit. With the clouds lifted, at least for now, some of the anxiety about the Buffalo Creek dam seemed to lift too.

The dam was built eight years earlier to contain and filter water used to wash mined coal. It was actually three dams, all of them made of slate, rock particles, and leftover coal, built in tiers on the hill overlooking Buffalo Creek. By 1972, the top dam held back a 31-foot-deep lake of 132 million gallons of slurry—enough to fill more than 200 Olympic swimming pools.

HISTORICAL IMAGES: COURTESY BUFFALO CREEK MEMORIAL LIBRARY (4)

By February all three dams had filled to near-overflow levels. And folks were worried.

Sylvia, a cook at the elementary school, and her husband, Robert, a miner, had other things on their minds. Their 21-year-old son, Terry, had been killed by a fellow soldier 16 months earlier in Vietnam. In the aftermath, Sylvia had been briefly hospitalized for depression. To try to recover, the couple had turned their focus toward bringing up Steven, who had earned a music scholarship to a nearby college.

A few months after Terry died, early in 1971, a young relative phoned to tell them she was pregnant and would not be able to raise the child. She offered the baby to the couple, and when he was born in May, the Albrights brought home a cherubic blond newborn boy, whom they named Kerry Lee. The couple had always wanted another child; the new baby was a bright spot in the otherwise dark time after Terry's death.

But that February evening in 1972, clouds were gathering again. Thunder rattled the house. Close to midnight, lightning illuminating the wet asphalt road in front of him, Robert drove his Gremlin to a nearby mine to work the hoot owl shift.

In previous days, conditions at the dam had been deteriorating. In 24 hours, between Thursday and Friday afternoons, the level of the slurry lake behind the dam had risen 18 inches. By Friday, the water was rising an

MAP BY 5W INFOGRAPHIC

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inch an hour, then faster as the hard rain started up again—two inches an hour, then three.

Pittston Coal Company mine officials hadn't ordered an evacuation for the valley, but most of the 18 homes and two trailers in Saunders, the town upstream from Lorado, had emptied out. Three miles south, in Lorado, porch lights burned all night as folks waited for word about the dam. Sylvia and Robert, on the other hand, figured this time would be like the rest—a lot of fretting for nothing.

Early the next morning, a crack ten feet wide and 30 feet long formed along the top of the uppermost dam. The front retaining wall bulged like soaked cardboard. Officials ordered workers to repair the dam, but it was too late. Before the work could begin, the dam's right side began to crumble like a sand castle. Water poured through, ripping the hole wider and wider.

It took mere minutes for the dam to collapse completely. The lake of black coal slurry surged toward the lower two dams, sparking a series of explosions as the water hit pockets of burning coal. In seconds, the two lower dams were obliterated.

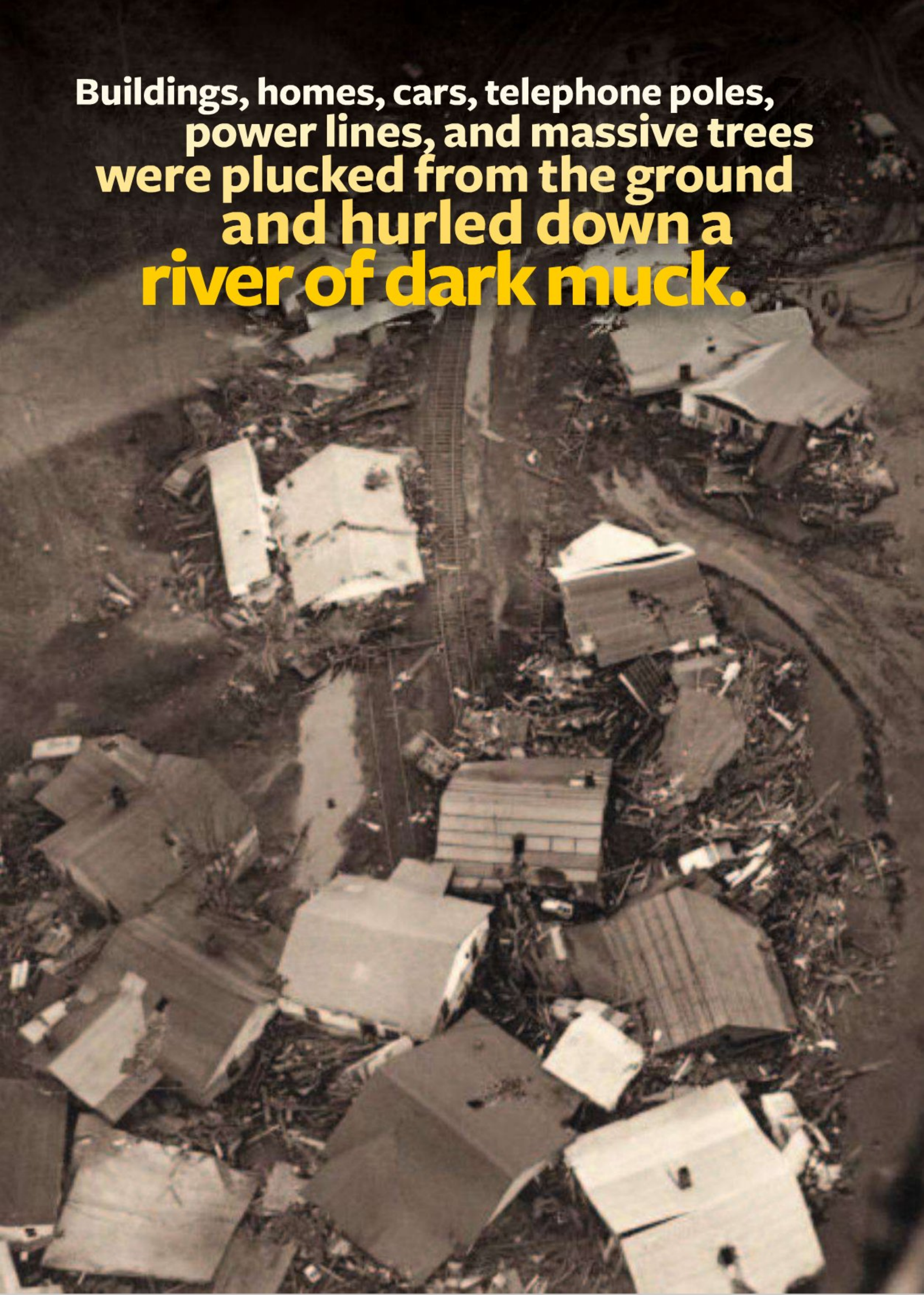
There was no longer anything to hold the water back. The wave washed into Saunders, sweeping away the Free Will Baptist Church, which the Albrights attended. The valley there was only 200 feet wide in places, rimmed by mountains that funneled the 20-foot wall of slurry at a rate of seven feet per second. Buildings, homes, cars, telephone poles, power lines, and massive trees were plucked from the ground and hurled down a river of dark muck. Within a few minutes, Saunders was leveled.

Meanwhile, Saturday morning had started sleepily at the Albright home. Sylvia, who had planned to go with Steven to Charleston for a concert, learned that the event had been rained out. She played with Kerry Lee and started the coffee. Robert would get home around 8:15, and the family would eat breakfast together.

A few minutes past eight, the lights flickered, then went out. Power outages happened sometimes, but then Sylvia and Steven heard cars honking their horns, people shouting. Steven went outside to investigate and looked up to see a 20-foot black mountain of water and debris coming toward the house. It rolled in like ocean waves, and on its crest, homes that had been torn off their foundations were thrown around like toy boats. People were still inside some of them. They grabbed at the windows, their faces masks of terror. In the roaring of the water, Steven could hear the buildings popping and snapping as they broke up.

He raced back inside. "The dam broke!" he shouted. Sylvia grabbed baby Kerry Lee, who was wearing only a diaper. Steven took his mother's arm, and together all three of them tumbled through the back door and into the yard, where the water

Buildings, homes, cars, telephone poles, power lines, and massive trees were plucked from the ground and hurled down a river of dark muck.



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was rising fast. Their only possible escape route was up a steep, densely wooded hill about 50 feet behind their home. Some of their neighbors—including Timmy Bailey, a classmate of Steven's—were already up there.

Sylvia held tightly to Kerry Lee and let Steven shepherd her through the water. The crest of the hill didn't seem very far, but each step through the viscous black liquid seemed to suck them down. By the time they made it to the limestone hill, they were up to their waists in black slurry. Their neighbors stretched out their hands, but Steven and Sylvia couldn't reach them.

Frantic to save Kerry Lee, Sylvia began swinging him back and forth to heave him up the hillside. But the water was too high and she was losing strength. She let the baby go. He hit the water and was instantly swept downstream. The flood dragged Sylvia and Steven after him.

Deep inside the Buffalo Creek mine, Robert Albright had spent the night fixing a broken coal loader. It wasn't until the drive home, when he saw the water spread across the valley, that he understood what had happened.

He drove the Gremlin as far as he could until water blocked the roadway. Then he abandoned the car, intending to walk the remaining half mile to Lorado. When he finally reached town around 9 a.m., it looked "like a bomb had gone off," as one neighbor put it. Houses had been thrown against other buildings or splintered into pieces. Lengths of railroad track were pretzeled around bridge pilings. Cars lay in mangled heaps. A layer of tarry coal sludge, as thick as pudding, covered everything. Amid the debris were the bodies of children and adults, broken, sludge-covered, and unrecognizable.

He yelled to a neighbor, "Where's my family?"

"They didn't get out," the neighbor replied.

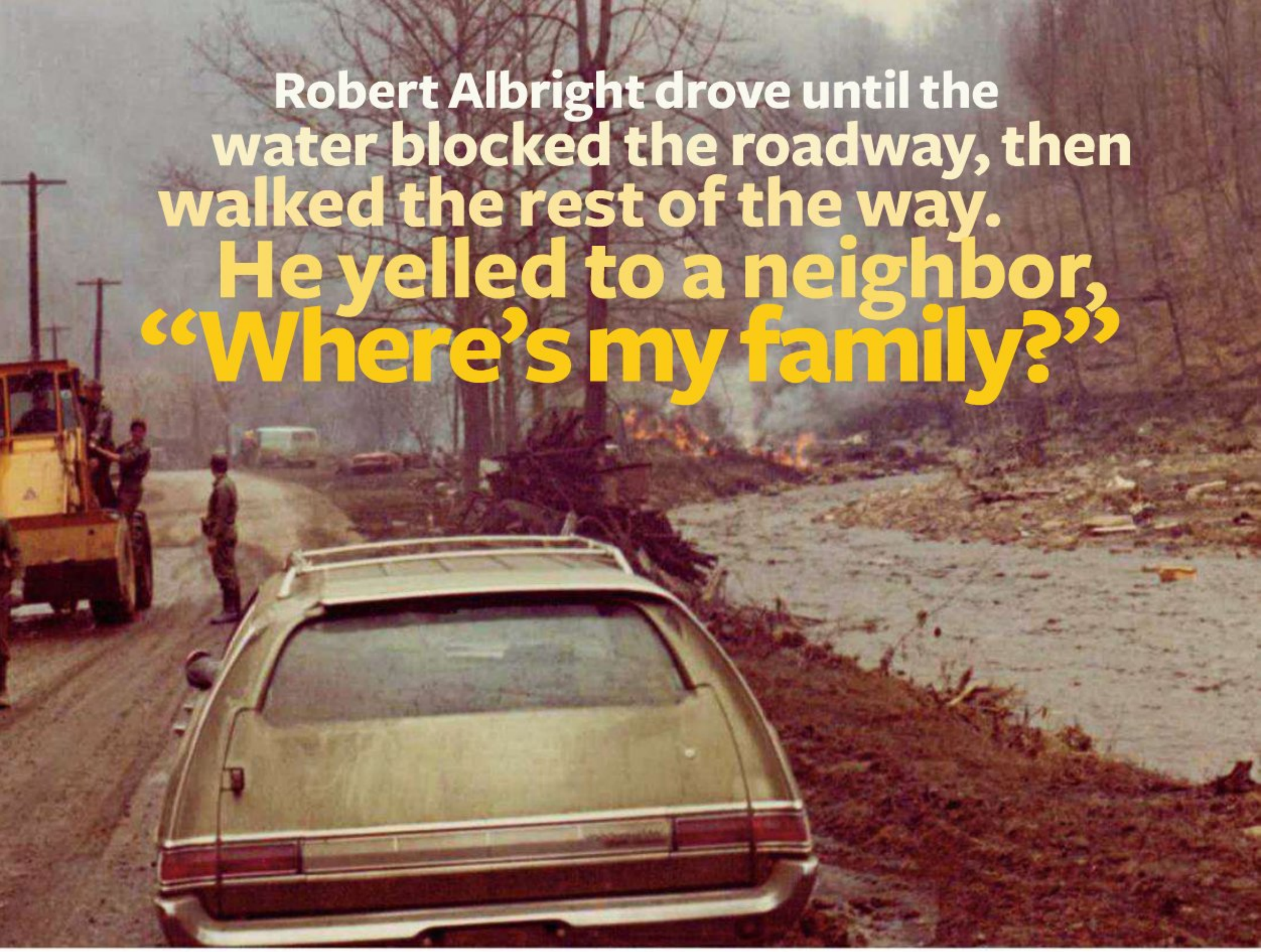
Robert crumpled. His family was dead.

Elsewhere amid the chaos, Ernest Vanover, a preacher, and his son Frank were searching for Frank's wife and little girl. The men picked their way toward Lundale, two miles away, where Frank's family had last been seen. As they crossed a culvert about a half mile from the Albrights' home, Frank heard a high-pitched mewling sound coming from the pile of debris below.

"Dad, I hear a baby crying," he said.

"It was probably just a dog or a cat," Ernest responded.

Still, he peered down and saw a tiny leg poking from the mud. It appeared to be a doll, but something impelled the men to dig into the muck with their hands. They pulled out a naked baby. The top of one thigh was cut to the bone. The boy's head was bloodied, and his mouth was packed with mud and sludge. He'd been buried facedown for possibly 20 to 30 minutes, but when the Vanovers cleaned


Robert Albright drove until the water blocked the roadway, then walked the rest of the way. He yelled to a neighbor, "Where's my family?"

the sticky black stuff from his mouth with a pocket handkerchief, he gasped for breath.

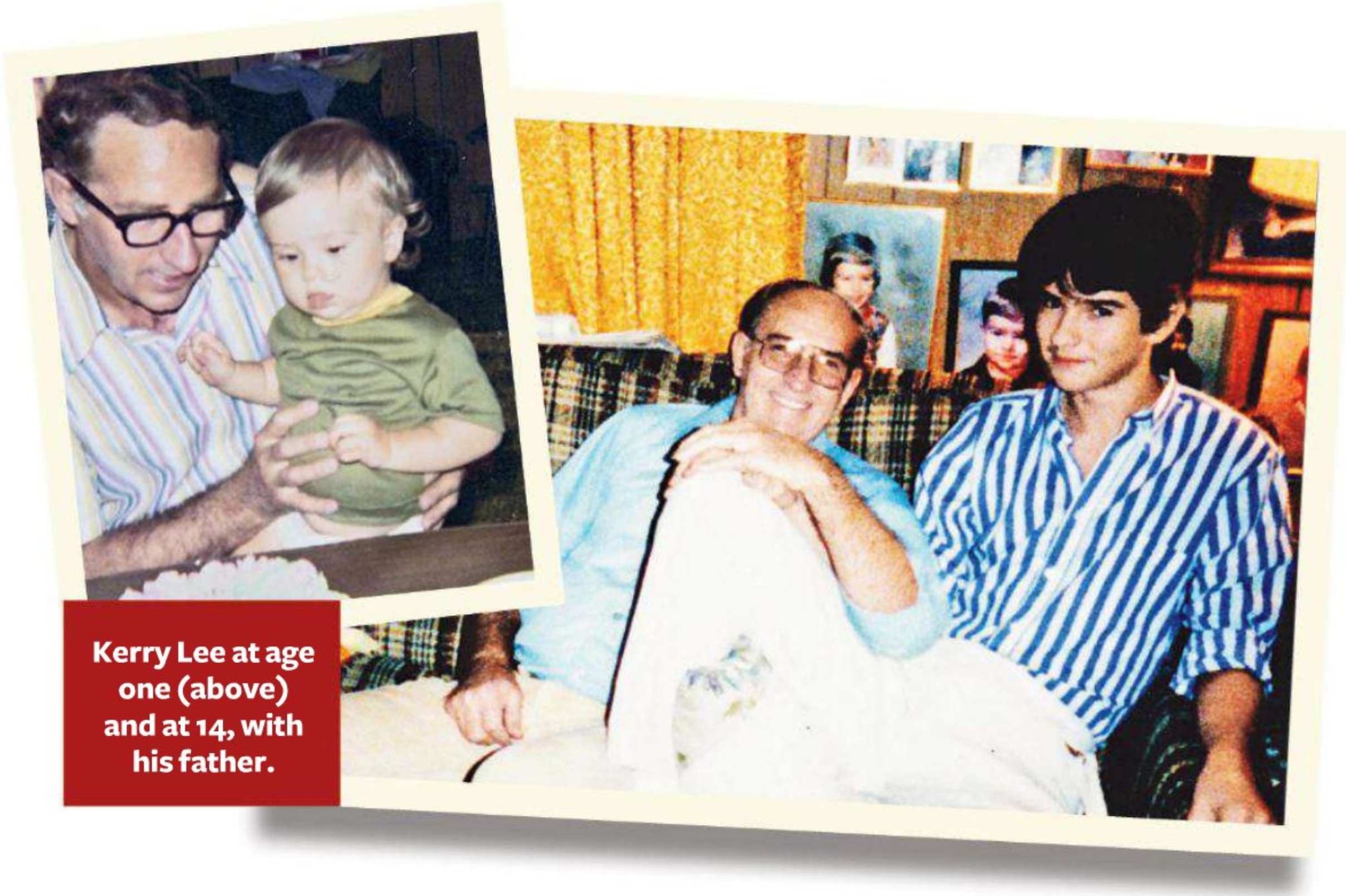
The men wrapped the boy in a coat, then carried him to a nearby home, where they found Sylvia's first cousin Katheryn Ghent. She was a nurse. "Here, Katheryn," Ernest Vanover said, handing her the wrapped bundle. "We found this baby." The child was so caked in coal oil that not even Katheryn recognized him as Kerry Lee Albright.

Katheryn wrapped the boy in a neighbor's bedspread and washed his mouth with fresh water until the nine-month-old spewed up black slurry and began to breathe more easily. Sylvia's sister, Patty Wright, recognized the baby instantly. "That's my sister's baby, Kerry Lee," she said. Katheryn passed the bundle off to her.

When it was clear that Kerry Lee was without his mother, Patty knew Sylvia was dead. Where were Robert and Steven?

Kerry Lee's silence worried her the most. "He never made one sound the whole time," she remembers. "He never even cried."

Robert climbed up the hill behind where his house once stood, searching for his family. He lost track of time. Then a neighbor approached him. "Your boy Kerry Lee might be alive." Robert felt a glimmer of hope



Kerry Lee at age one (above) and at 14, with his father.

spring up in him. He was directed down the mountain to his sister-in-law's house. When he walked in, Patty was on the floor, cradling a silent Kerry Lee. "Robert, I can't get him to cry," she said. "I'm still trying to get this black stuff out of his mouth." Robert leaned over and tenderly kissed Kerry Lee on the cheek, then picked him up. At last, the gravely injured nine-month-old started wailing. He knew his father.

It took Robert and Patty the rest of the day to get Kerry Lee across the devastated valley and to the hospital in Man, 11 miles away. "When they unfolded the blanket, [his leg] looked like a meat cleaver had been taken to it," says Patty. Doctors rushed to repair his leg and other wounds. Robert stayed at Kerry Lee's side, not changing out of his filthy work clothes for three days, until someone brought him something clean to wear.

On the fifth day after the flood, Robert filed into the temporary morgue set up at South Man Grade School to identify the bodies of Steven and Sylvia, who had been found 800 yards from their home. They were among 118 people, ranging in age from three months to 82 years old, who were killed along Buffalo Creek. The flood ravaged the town in minutes, injuring 1,100 people and destroying more than 500 homes. Officials from Pittston Coal Company called the disaster "an act of God."

Later, Robert moaned to Patty, "Why in the world would God take my [wife] and my boy and leave this baby like this? Why couldn't he have taken me?"

COURTESY KERRY ALBRIGHT (2)

Robert Albright never returned to his job in the coal mines. Living on disability payments and, later, on a small payout from the company that had designed the dams, he devoted himself to Kerry Lee, learning to bathe the baby, mend his clothes, and cook pots of beef stew to last a week. "Holding me and learning to rock me to sleep was a big thing for him," says Kerry, his preferred name as an adult. "But he did it." After spending a few years in a trailer, Robert built a new home in Lorado on the same lot as the first one. He filled the yard with go-karts, bows and arrows, a motorcycle. When Kerry Lee showed a talent for performing, Robert signed him up for private dance and voice lessons. Over and over again, he told his son, "You can do whatever you want to do and be whatever you want to be, but you will not work in that coal mine." With Kerry at his bedside, Robert Albright died of throat cancer, at age 70, in 2000.

Though he never knew his mother, Kerry thinks often of her sacrifice for him. "It must have been such an overwhelming moment when she knew that the only way to save me was to throw me," he says. But, he explains, he never felt like he was without a mother. "I had a lot of people who acted as mother figures," he says. "I felt like I had about 20 mothers."

Kerry understands why he was known as a miracle baby but insists his father's survival was just as extraordinary.

"There's really no logical explanation for why I survived," he continues. "But my father had been through the deaths of his wife and two sons," Kerry says. "All he had left was this baby he'd adopted. I think I gave him something to live for." ■

ENGLISH WITERATURE

Intentionally bad first lines from nonexistent novels, from the annual Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest:

Corinne considered the colors (palest green, gray and lavender) and texture (downy as the finest velvet) and wondered, "How long have these cold cuts been in my refrigerator?" *Linda Boatright*

Tucked in a dim corner of The Ample Bounty Bar & Grille, Alice welcomed the fervent touch of the mysterious stranger's experienced hands because she had not been this close with a man in an achingly long time and, quivering breathlessly, began to think that this could be the beginning of something real, something forever, and not just a one-time encounter with a good Samaritan who was skilled at the Heimlich Maneuver. *Mark Wisnewski*

Salt

We Misjudged You!

For decades, we've been told to eat less salt for lower blood pressure. Now, one writer's shocking perspective on why this advice may be harming, not helping, our health.

BY GARY TAUBES

FROM THE *New York Times*

The first time I questioned the conventional wisdom on the nature of a healthy diet, I was in my salad days, almost 40 years ago, and the subject was salt. Researchers claimed that salt supplementation was unnecessary after strenuous exercise, and this advice was passed on by health reporters. I recalled high school football practices in suburban Maryland, sweating profusely through double sessions on swamplike 90-degree days. Without salt pills, I couldn't make it through a two-hour practice; I couldn't walk across the parking lot afterward without cramping.

While sports nutritionists have since come around to recommend that we should replenish salt when we sweat it out in physical activity, the message that

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRAVIS RATHBONE

we should avoid salt at all other times remains strong. Experts say salt raises blood pressure, causes hypertension, and increases the risk of premature death. This is why the Department of Agriculture's dietary guidelines still consider salt Public Enemy No. 1, before fats, sugar, and alcohol. It's why the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has suggested that reducing salt consumption is as critical to long-term health as quitting cigarettes. And yet, this eat-less-salt argument is surprisingly controversial—because the actual evidence to support it has always been so weak.

When I spent the better part of a year researching the state of the salt science back in 1998—already a quarter century into the eat-less-salt recommendations—journal editors and public health administrators were remarkably candid about how flimsy the evidence was implicating salt as the cause of hypertension.

In fact, an editor for the *Journal of the American Medical Association* told me at the time that the authorities pushing the eat-less-salt message had made a commitment to salt education that goes way beyond the scientific facts.

While, back then, the evidence merely failed to demonstrate that salt was harmful, the evidence from studies published over the past two years actually suggests that restricting salt can increase our likelihood of dying prematurely. Put simply, the possibility has been raised that if we were to eat as little salt as the USDA and CDC recommend, we'd harm rather than help ourselves.

A Hypothesis Yet to Be Proved

Why have we been told that salt is so deadly? The advice has always sounded reasonable: Eat more salt, and your body retains water to maintain a stable concentration of sodium in your blood. This is why salty food tends to make us thirsty: We drink more; we retain water. The result can be a temporary increase in blood pressure, which will persist until our kidneys eliminate both salt and water.

The scientific question is whether this temporary phenomenon translates to chronic problems: If we eat too much salt for years, does it raise our blood pressure, cause hypertension, then strokes, and then kill us prematurely? It makes sense, but it's only a hypothesis. The reason scientists do experiments is to find out if hypotheses are true.

In 1972, when the National Institutes of Health introduced the National High Blood Pressure Education Program to help prevent hypertension, no meaningful experiments had yet been done. The best research on the connection between salt and hypertension came from two pieces of evidence. One was the repeated observation that populations that ate little

FOOD STYLIST: MATT VOHR FOR HALLEY RESOURCES; PROP STYLIST: LAURIE RAAB FOR APOSTROPHE

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raise the risk of **dying prematurely.**

salt had virtually no hypertension. But they didn't eat a lot of things—sugar, for instance—and any one of those could have been the causal factor. The second was a strain of "salt-sensitive" rats that reliably developed hypertension on a high-salt diet. The catch was that "high salt" to these rats was 50 times more than what the average American consumes.

Still, the program was founded to help prevent hypertension, and prevention programs require preventive measures to recommend. Eating less salt seemed to be the best option at the time, short of losing weight. Although researchers quietly acknowledged that the data were "inconclusive and contradictory" or "inconsistent and contradictory"—two quotes from cardiologist Jeremiah Stamler, MD, a leading proponent of the eat-less-salt campaign, in 1967 and 1983—publicly, the link between salt and blood pressure was upgraded from hypothesis to fact.

In the years since, the NIH has spent enormous sums on studies to test the hypothesis, and those have singularly failed to make the evidence more conclusive. Instead, organizations advocating salt restriction today—the USDA, the Institute of Medicine, the CDC, and the NIH—all essentially rely on the results from one 30-day trial: the 2001 DASH-Sodium study. It suggested that eating significantly less salt would modestly lower blood pressure; it said nothing about whether this would prevent heart disease or lengthen life.

The Problem with Too Little Salt

The idea that eating less salt can worsen health outcomes may sound bizarre, but it's not new. A 1972 paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that the less salt people ate, the higher their levels of renin, a substance secreted by the kidneys, which set off a physiological cascade of events that seemed to end with an increased risk of heart disease. In this scenario: Eat less salt, secrete more renin, get heart disease, and then die prematurely.

Four years ago, Italian researchers began publishing the results from a series of clinical trials, all of which reported that, among patients with heart failure, reducing salt consumption increased the risk of dying prematurely. Other recent studies suggest that reducing sodium to anything like what government policy refers to as a "safe upper limit" (one teaspoon a day if you're healthy) is likely to do more harm than good. These studies, which covered some 100,000 people in more than 30 countries, showed that salt consumption is remarkably consistent—about one and a half teaspoons a day—among populations over time. This suggests that how much salt we eat is deter-

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WHO'S RIGHT?

The Other Side of the Salt Shaker

EDITOR'S NOTE: It's hardly surprising that this article came under fire from the public health community after it was published. Salt has become a controversial topic as more conflicting research questions whether too much, or too little, is harmful. Critics point to flaws in some of the research this article cites, including studies that are too short-term, that over-rely on one-day measures of sodium excretion as a meaningful measure of salt intake, and that draw conclusions for the population as a whole from studies of people with specific health conditions. In November, the American Heart Association released a new analysis supporting its recommendation that all Americans reduce their salt intake.

But as Michael Alderman, MD, editor of the *American Journal of Hypertension,* told the *New York Times* last May, one of the problems with the salt debate is that "all the studies are inadequate." The kind of research that could provide an answer once and for all—a large study in which people are randomly assigned to a low-sodium diet or not and then followed for years to measure health outcomes—may never happen, due to the expense, as well as logistical and ethical challenges.

Reader's Digest looks for the most thought-provoking health reads in the land. Gary Taubes, a science writer who has famously challenged conventional weight-loss wisdom, now raises important questions about how health public policy regarding salt was established. As the debate evolves, William B. White, MD, president of the American Society of Hypertension, offers this guideline: Salt intake is likely not a concern for healthy people. "But for those with high blood pressure, heart disease, or kidney disease, there's enough evidence to show that too much salt is toxic," he says. If you're concerned about how much salt you should be eating, don't make any major changes without first talking to your doctor. *Lauren Gelman*

mined by physiological demands, not diet choices. And a handful of these studies—involving type 1 diabetics, type 2 diabetics, healthy Europeans, and patients with chronic heart failure—reported that the people eating salt at the lower limit of normal were more likely to have heart disease than those eating smack in the middle of the normal range. Effectively what the 1972 paper on the salt-renin connection would have predicted.

Proponents of the eat-less-salt campaign tend to deal with this contradictory evidence by implying that anyone raising it is a shill for the food industry (which has been widely criticized for adding salt to processed foods to improve taste) and doesn't care about saving lives. An NIH administrator told me back in 1998 that to publicly question the science on salt was to play into the hands of the food industry.

When several agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, held a hearing last November to discuss how to go about getting Americans to eat less salt (as opposed to whether or not we should eat less salt), these anti-salt proponents argued that the latest reports suggesting damage from lower-salt diets should simply be ignored. According to cardiologist Graham MacGregor, MD, who has been promoting low-salt diets since the 1980s, the studies were no more than "a minor irritation that causes us a bit of aggravation."

This attitude that studies that go against prevailing beliefs should be ignored on the basis that, well, they go against prevailing beliefs, has been the norm for the anti-salt campaign for decades. Maybe now the prevailing beliefs should be changed.

Gary Taubes is a recipient of a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Investigator Award in Health Policy Research and author of *Why We Get Fat: And What to Do About It*.

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* (JUNE 2, 2012), © 2012 BY THE NEW YORK TIMES CO., NYTIMES.COM

PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

Actor/director Penny Marshall has a new book out called My Mother Was Nuts (*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*). *It's about the crazy characters she's worked with, and we asked her who the craziest of the lot was. Her answer: Robin Williams.*

"When we shot *Awakenings*, there's a scene where Robert De Niro is frozen in a catatonic state, and a cockroach is supposed to cross the desk. But Bob doesn't like cockroaches very much, and he kept jumping up. So we had to do it a few times. Robin was offscreen all this time pretending to be the voice of the cockroach. He'd yell out things like 'I was up for a part in the Raid commercial!' which would make Bobby laugh, and then we'd have to wait until Bobby's face was less red from laughing, because he's supposed to be sick."

The Best Laugh

January 13

Ship Wrecked

The fleeing captain of the *Costa Concordia* is ordered back on board after the cruise ship runs aground off Italy. "It's starting to look like that Captain Schettino was less than brave. I'm not saying the captain has to go down with the ship—but at least get wet."

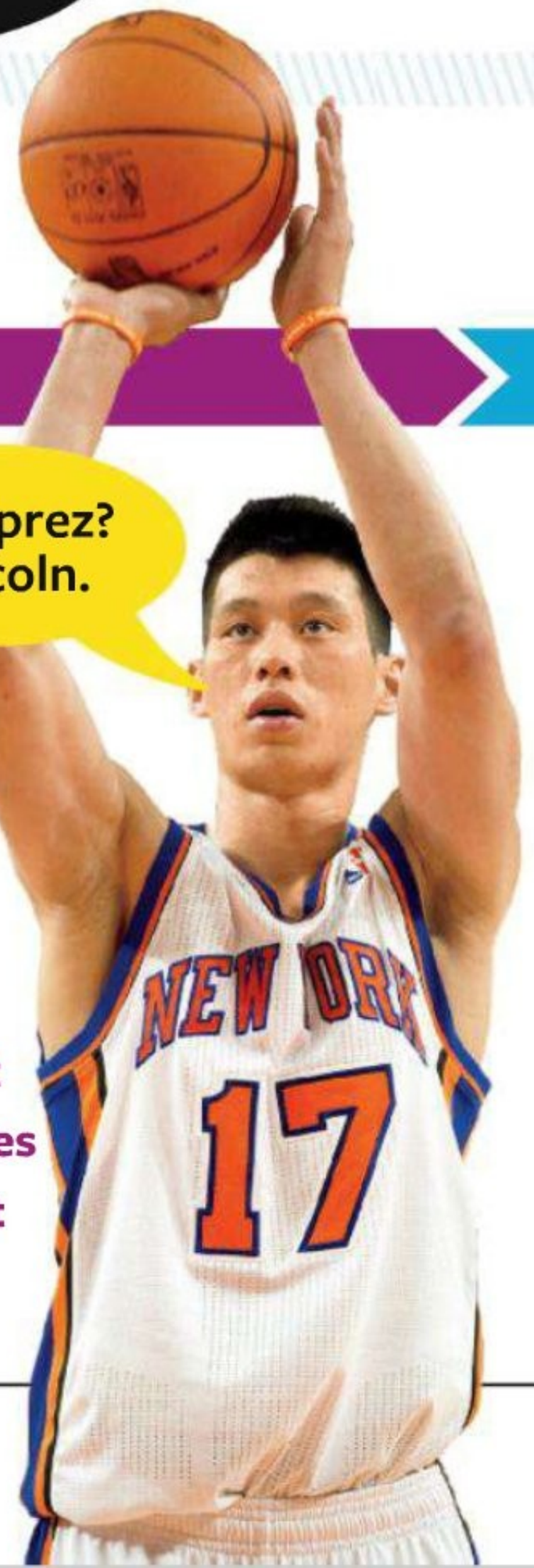
Bill Maher

February 4

Linsanity Debuts

"Linsane," "Just Lincredible," "Lin Your Face," and "Linderella" are just some of the bon mots that celebrate New York Knicks benchwarmer Jeremy Lin's surprising basketball fame. Still, David Letterman felt the pun-dits came up short. So his staff wrote a few more:

- **Law and Order: Criminal Lin-tent**
- **Lin-ternational House of Lin-cakes**
- **Lin-terest-bearing Lin-vestment Grade Financial Lin-strument**



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The past 365 days proved manna from heaven for comedians. **Here are their funniest jokes.**

S of the Year

BY ANDY SIMMONS

February 6

The Jubilee

Queen Elizabeth II marks 60 years on the throne. Her greatest accomplishment: living with Prince Philip, the master of the "What did you just say?" comment. During the celebration, Philip asked a disabled man on a scooter, "How many people have you knocked over this morning on that thing?" Here are more of his classic lines through history.

TO THE QUEEN AFTER HER CORONATION:
(Pointing to her crown) "Where did you get the hat?"

TO A DRIVING INSTRUCTOR IN SCOTLAND:
"How do you keep the natives off the booze long enough to get them through the test?"

TO A STUDENT WHO HAD BEEN TREKKING IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA:
"You managed not to get eaten, then?"

TO THE PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA, DRESSED IN TRADITIONAL ROBES:
"You look like you're ready for bed!"

FROM LEFT: ANTHONY J. CAUSI/CORBIS. GETTY IMAGES

February 26

Oscar Night

After the silent film *The Artist* wins five Academy Awards, @michael_chapin tweets "essentially, a flip-book won the Oscars."

Chris Rock, presenting the Oscar for best animated film: "I like animation because you can play anything. If you're a white man, you can play an Arabian prince. And if you're a black man, you can play a donkey!"

May 10

Mayans: My Bad

The discovery of a missing Mayan calendar piece disproves 2012 Armageddon.

"OK, everyone can relax now. My Mayan insurance agent just sent me the 2013 Mayan calendar."

Comedian
Bob Tzu

FROM TOP: RETNA LTD. TOM DIPACE/AP PHOTO

June 11

Tortoise Divorce

After 115 years together, Bibi and Poldi, a mated pair of giant tortoises at an Austrian zoo, had a fight and are no longer on speaking terms. The *Week* asked its readers to suppose the last sentence one of them spoke to the other:

- **"Wow! Your 90-year-old sister looks hot!"**
- **"Call me when your butt fits into your shell again."**
- **"We'll always have Galapagos."**

June 17

Remembering Dad

"Happy Father's Day—or as they call it in my family, Happy brother-in-law's day."

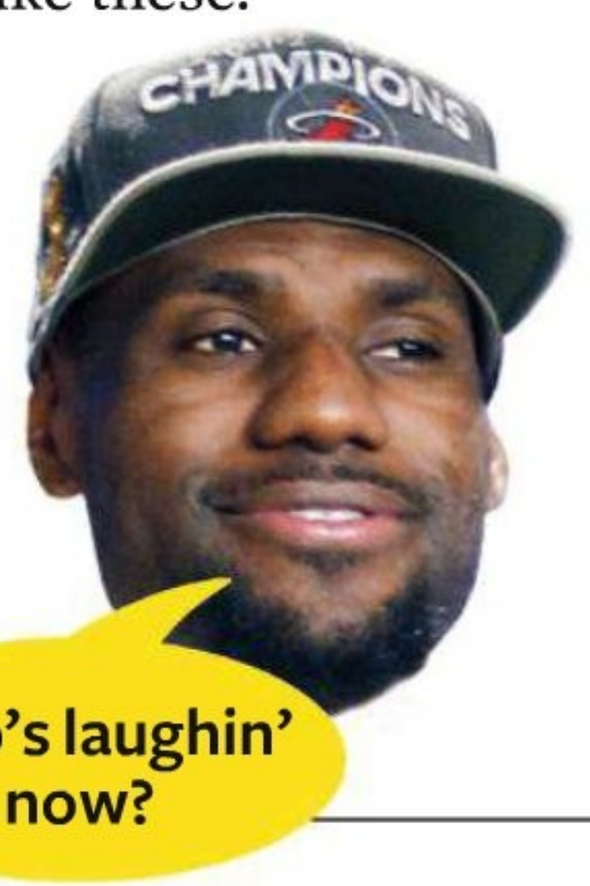
A tweet from Woody Allen's son
Ronan Farrow

June 21

Chump to Champ

The Miami Heat win the NBA finals. LeBron James is crowned MVP, marking the end of one of the hottest commodities in comedy—LeBron James choking jokes, like these:

- **I once asked LeBron if he had change for a dollar. He gave me 75 cents and said he has no fourth quarter.**
- **When you are at the cinema, set your phone to LeBron mode—no ring!**



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May 18

Facebook Goes Public and Tanks

Why is Facebook going public? They couldn't figure out the privacy settings either. @edrabbit

July 27

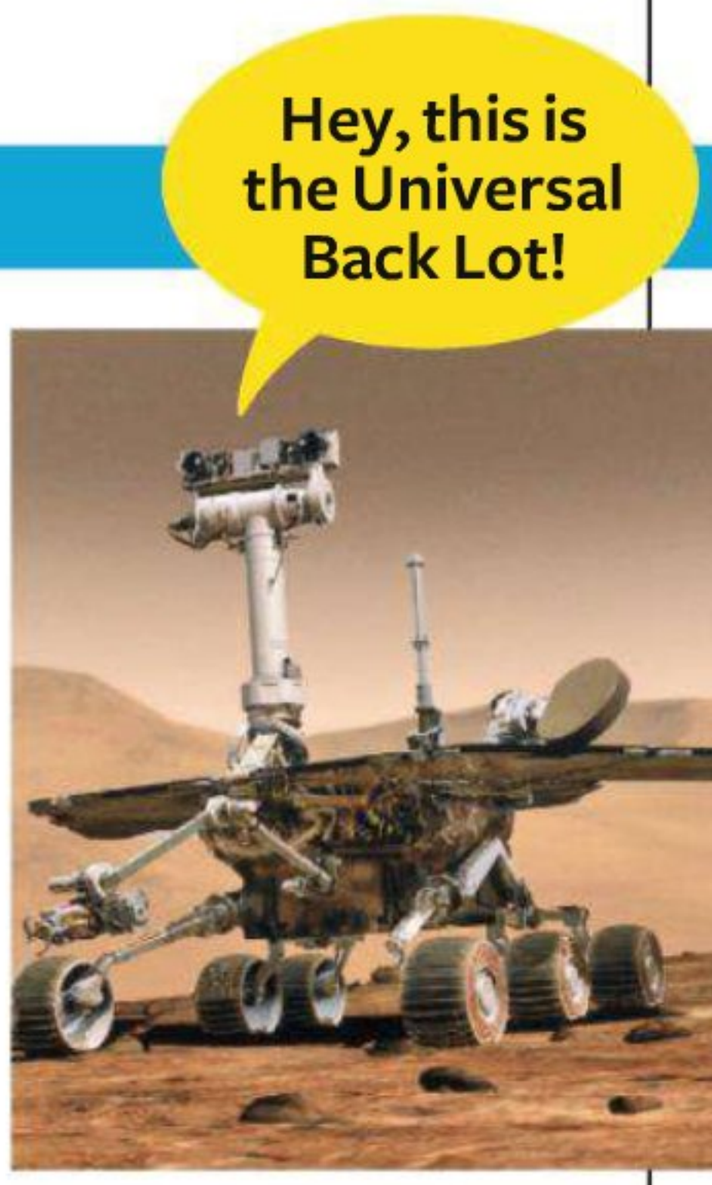
The London Olympics

The tweetosphere goes for the gold:

smartphone
The biggest challenge for any Olympic athlete is to avoid winding up like Bruce Jenner. @scullymike
Every Olympic event should include one average person competing, for reference. @scottsimpson
Every four years, for two weeks, Ping-Pong becomes "table tennis." @scullymike
Somalia on the phone. Very apologetic. They've only just realized that shooting and sailing are two separate events. @charles_HRH
ME WATCHING OLYMPIC EVENT: "Holy @#$% that was amazing!" COMMENTATOR: "Ooh, that was not good at all. He must really be upset with himself." @robdelaney

August 6

Hello, Mars!



The Mars rover lands on Mars—and is none too happy about it, as evidenced by these pronouncements on the faux Twitter feed **@Sarcastic rover:**

- **"Mars can get down to -153° Celsius. Good thing no one bothered to pack me a sweater! Idiots."**
- **"Hey guys! I found an alien! ... Oh, no, wait ... just another stupid rock. Awesome."**
- **"2.5 billion dollars, and I can't even watch AMC out here?! That's fine. I can catch up on *Breaking Bad* when I get back. Oh wait ..."**
- **"I hope I discover water on this planet ... so I can drown myself in it."**

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: C. FLANIGAN/GETTY IMAGES. GETTY IMAGES. GREGOR SCHUSTER/GETTY IMAGES. GARY GERSHOFF/GETTY IMAGES

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September 23

The Emmys

Host **Jimmy Kimmel** states the obvious:

"Being a Republican in Hollywood is like being a Chick-fil-A sandwich on the snack table at *Glee*."

September 24

Football Refs Return

Tweets **@BuckShotttt:**

"I think all these refs were the people in school who always picked 'C' when they weren't sure."

October 3

Greece swears it's getting its house in order ... yet again.

"Greek government submits latest contribution to Greek mythology: its 2013 draft budget." fark.com headline

October 22

The Last of the Debates

Fark.com asked its viewers to describe the debates using only movie titles:

- *Groundhog Day*
- *The Usual Suspects*
- *Mean Girls*
- *The Russians Are Coming*
- *Fight Club*
- *Clueless*
- *True Lies*
- *Stop or My Mom Will Shoot*
- *Irreconcilable Differences*

November 6

Election Night

"Report: 2012 Election Likely to Be Decided by 4 or 5 Key Swing Corporations"

Headline from the *Onion*

"You know those women who write love letters to men in prison? Their vote counts just as much as yours."

@JennyJohnsonHi5

"'Romney just won Botswana.' –CNN, using Apple Maps for their election coverage"

@StevenAmiri

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ALBERT L. ORTEGA/GETTY IMAGES. RYAN MCVAY/GETTY IMAGES. GETTY IMAGES. CHARLIE NEIBERGALL/ AP PHOTO. EVERETT COLLECTION

October 5

More Jobs

Unemployment dips under 8 percent. Conservatives cry foul.

Jon Stewart: "I gotta say, if you're cooking the books, 7.8 percent unemployment is a [lousy] recipe."

October 10

Nobel Prizes Announced

Americans win in Chemistry. Soon after, the Ig Nobel Prizes are presented for very real and very weird science.

PSYCHOLOGY: For the study "Leaning to the Left Makes the Eiffel Tower Seem Smaller."

ANATOMY: For discovering that chimpanzees can ID other chimps via photographs of their butts.

MEDICINE: For advice to doctors on minimizing the chance that patients will explode during a colonoscopy.

November 22

Thanksgiving

Some questions the folks at Butterball have fielded on their Turkey Talk-Line:

- **When asked what state her turkey was in (i.e., how thawed it was), the caller said, "Florida."**
- **After cutting his turkey with a chain saw, a man asked how the oil from the chain might affect the turkey.**
- **A woman complained that her turkey had no breast meat. Turns out the turkey was upside down.**

December 20

Jersey Shore Goes Off the Air

"*Jersey Shore* died exactly how it didn't live: quietly, soberly, and without leaving behind any streaks of spray tan," wrote Jen Chaney on washingtonpost.com. Here are some quotes from the show we'll always remember:

Snooki: "I don't eat lobster because they're alive when you kill it."

Vinny: "Don't touch me, I'm tan!"

Deena: "Who is these girls?"

Pauly D: "I'm over here tryin' to clean my sneaks. I can't concentrate with all this fighting ... like they're talkin' about relationships, and my sneakers are dirty!"

JWoww: "I'm allergic to pecans sometimes."

Ronnie: "I've dranken a lot more than I drank tonight."

The Situation: "I'm, like, a pretty deep dude."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: NOEL VASQUEZ/GETTY IMAGES. DAVE KOTINSKY/GETTY IMAGES. NOEL VASQUEZ/GETTY IMAGES

TWO MILLION REASONS FOR MURDER

BY KENNETH MILLER

JUSTIN BARBER SAID HIS WIFE WAS KILLED DURING A LATE-NIGHT ROBBERY. BUT THE DETAILS DIDN'T ADD UP.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JESSE LENZ

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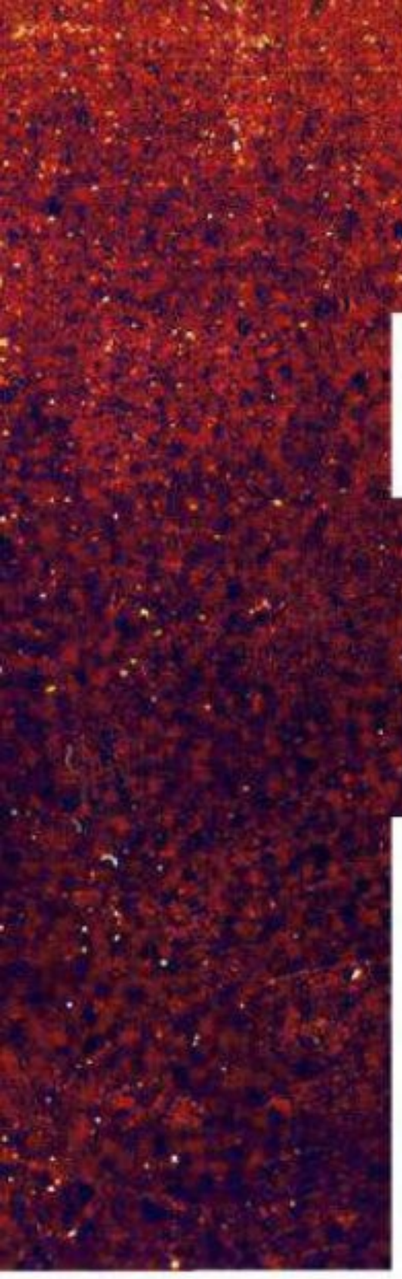


For couples craving solitude, the beach at Guana River State Park is an ideal spot for a late-night tryst. Hidden by thickets of saw palmetto, the ribbon of sand unspools along a lonesome stretch of Route A1A south of Jacksonville, Florida. Entry after sunset is officially forbidden, but intrepid lovers often park on the roadside and follow wooden walkways into the dunes.

Justin Barber, 30, and his wife, April, 27, had done just that on August 17, 2002. They were tipsy and amorous, Justin later recalled, having celebrated their third wedding anniversary with dinner at an Italian restaurant, followed by drinks at a bar. Around 10:30 p.m., as they strolled along the water's edge, a tall man in a baggy T-shirt approached them. He waved a pistol and yelled something about cash and car keys. Justin stepped in front of April. The gun went off. He grappled with the stranger. The beach went black.

When Justin came to, he found he'd been shot four times—in both shoulders, under the right nipple, and through the left hand. The man was gone. Justin called April's name, then spotted her floating facedown in the surf. There was a .22-caliber hole in her left cheek. He dragged her up the beach until his strength gave out, then left her and staggered to the road to flag down passing cars. When none stopped, he climbed into his Toyota 4Runner, turned on the flashers, and gunned it. Nearly ten miles down the road, a motorist signaled him to pull over and called 911. As Justin was transferred to a hospital, police and rescuers searched the beach for April.

Lt. Ben Tanner of the St. Johns County Sheriff's Department found her. "She was lying with her head to the north, facing the ocean," he says. "She didn't have a pulse."

APRIL'S PHOTO IS ETCHED into her tombstone; it shows a woman with a brilliant smile, corn silk hair, and exquisite cheekbones. But her beauty wasn't just skin-deep. April was a survivor of family tragedy who poured her energy into helping others, from her younger siblings to the cancer patients she served as a radiation therapist. "She put more value on relationships than most people do," says her best friend, Amber Mitchell, an Internet entrepreneur in Oklahoma City. "She didn't take life for granted."

PREVIOUS SPREAD: DARON DEAN/AP PHOTO. THE *RECORD*/AP PHOTO

Who would want to snuff out such a vibrant spirit? Justin would tell investigators that he thought the culprit was a crazed mugger. But a few of those close to April suspected the killer was someone she knew very well.

APRIL GREW UP IN Hennessey (pop. 2,024), Oklahoma, an island of century-old storefronts and modest homes in a sea of prairie. She was an A student, thoughtful yet popular, as comfortable at a rodeo as in biology lab.

During April's senior year of high school, her mother was diagnosed with lung cancer and died after six months of agony. April's father, an oil field worker, was too traumatized to care for the kids. Though relatives took them in, April became a surrogate mom to her siblings Julie, then nine, and Kendon, one. Still, she kept her grades up. She went on to the premed program at Oklahoma State University, then studied radiation therapy at the University of Oklahoma.

In October 1998, Amber Mitchell introduced April to one of her business school classmates—a handsome blond named Justin. The two clicked instantly. April had dated a string of men for whom fidelity was not a strong point; Justin seemed different. He spoke of his Christian values. He had grown up in a town even smaller than Hennessey, herding cattle with his brother on their parents' 120-acre spread. A quiet, solitary boy, he'd blossomed into a star athlete in high school and graduated as valedictorian. He'd married in college and spent a few years drifting between jobs, but when he met April, he was newly divorced and aflame with ambition. "He was among the best and brightest in our class," says Amber. "April was attracted to his drivenness."

April and Justin quickly became engaged. On August 4, 1999, they married in a small ceremony in the Bahamas, then relocated for Justin's new job in Douglas, Georgia. April found work at a hospital. A month later, her siblings moved in, and the trouble began. Julie was 15 then, and her rebellious behavior infuriated Justin, sparking fights between April and him. At one point, according to several of April's confidants, he threatened to never let April bear his children. Within a year, Julie and Kendon were back in Oklahoma.

By then, some of April's loved ones had begun to see a disturbing pattern. "Justin seemed very into appearances," says April's aunt Patti Parrish, a civil court judge. He tried on his jeans from high school every month and fasted until they fit. He made fun of his overweight mother behind her back and publicly criticized April's singing voice, her clothing, and her weight. He warned her not to embarrass him at his company Christmas party and discouraged her from contacting him

ONE DAY, APRIL SAID, "IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ME, SUSPECT FOUL PLAY."

at work. When his barbs made her cry, he mimicked her sobs. Yet April tolerated Justin's mistreatment.

But in January 2001, when Justin was transferred to Jacksonville, April decided to stay put. "She told me that if they lived together every day, they'd kill each other," Amber says. Justin bought a condo in an upscale neighborhood, and the two saw each other on weekends. Usually it was April who drove the three hours to visit.

COLE KNEW HE WAS DEALING WITH A LIAR ... BUT THERE WERE NO WITNESSES.

She just wasn't ready to give up on Justin. He could be charming, and his criticisms dovetailed with some of her deep insecurities. "She was harder on herself than anyone else," says Amber. "She put up with a lot from her men."

Still, there was always a point at which she drew the line.

THE MAN IN THE HOSPITAL bed was personable and seemed eager to help catch his wife's killer. But something about him made Detective Howard "Skip" Cole uneasy. "His body language and demeanor didn't seem appropriate," says Cole, 35, who'd been assigned to lead the investigation.

In the days that followed, Cole's suspicions grew. Justin's story was frustratingly vague, and the details kept changing. The case raised a slew of questions. How did Justin escape with minor wounds, while his wife was killed with a single shot? Why did he claim she'd been drinking, when her blood-alcohol level measured .000? Why had he left his cell phone at home that night, and why didn't he use April's? What made him drive so far in search of help, when there were mansions and gas stations along his route?

Meanwhile, April's Aunt Patti remembered that in the summer of 2001, April had told her Justin wanted them to take out $2 million insurance policies on each other's lives. "She asked if I didn't think it weird," Patti says. "I told her yeah but said I didn't think they would qualify. She called back the next day and said, 'You can't say anything to Justin. He'll be furious if he finds out I told you.'"

Justin found a company that would cover them. Not long afterward, April began to suspect he was having an affair. She told Amber she'd found an earring in his bedroom, and in July 2002, she discovered he was playing tennis regularly with a rental-car agent named Shannon Kennedy. April e-mailed him at work, asking him to tell her when he was socializing with other women. Justin responded with a sarcastic message listing every female he'd glimpsed that day.

April told her boss, Ramesh Nair, that she was going to confront Justin on their anniversary—August 4. She visited Justin that weekend; when she returned, she told Nair that she'd threatened to end the marriage. On Friday the 16th, she drove back to Jack-

sonville. The next night, she was dead.

Amber and Patti's first thought was, Justin did it. And Nair was struck by a memory from a few months earlier: "One day, out of the blue, April said, 'If anything happens to me, suspect foul play.' I answered with a joke, and she looked hurt, like, You're not taking me seriously. Don't forget."

JUSTIN ASKED PATTI if she would front for April's burial expenses. "What about the $2 million?" she responded. Startled, he said, "Did April tell you?" He told her he thought the policy had lapsed. Patti did some digging and learned that it hadn't.

At the funeral, in Hennessey's First Baptist Church, a crowd of 300 overflowed the pews. Several attendees were struck by Justin's failure to cry, though he appeared to be trying. The next day, Patti called Detective Cole. She told him what she knew and put him in touch with Amber.

During a search of Justin's condo, Cole found the insurance policy. Brought in for questioning, Justin denied his affair with Shannon Kennedy until he was told she was in the next room; then he insisted that his marriage had been generally placid.

Cole knew he was dealing with a liar, but arresting Justin for murder was another matter. There were no witnesses; no weapon had been found. Even the motive remained fuzzy. Justin had a base salary in the $70,000s; his wife earned nearly as much. Living apart from her, he could cheat with relative impunity. Did he kill her—and shoot himself—simply to upgrade his lifestyle a few notches?

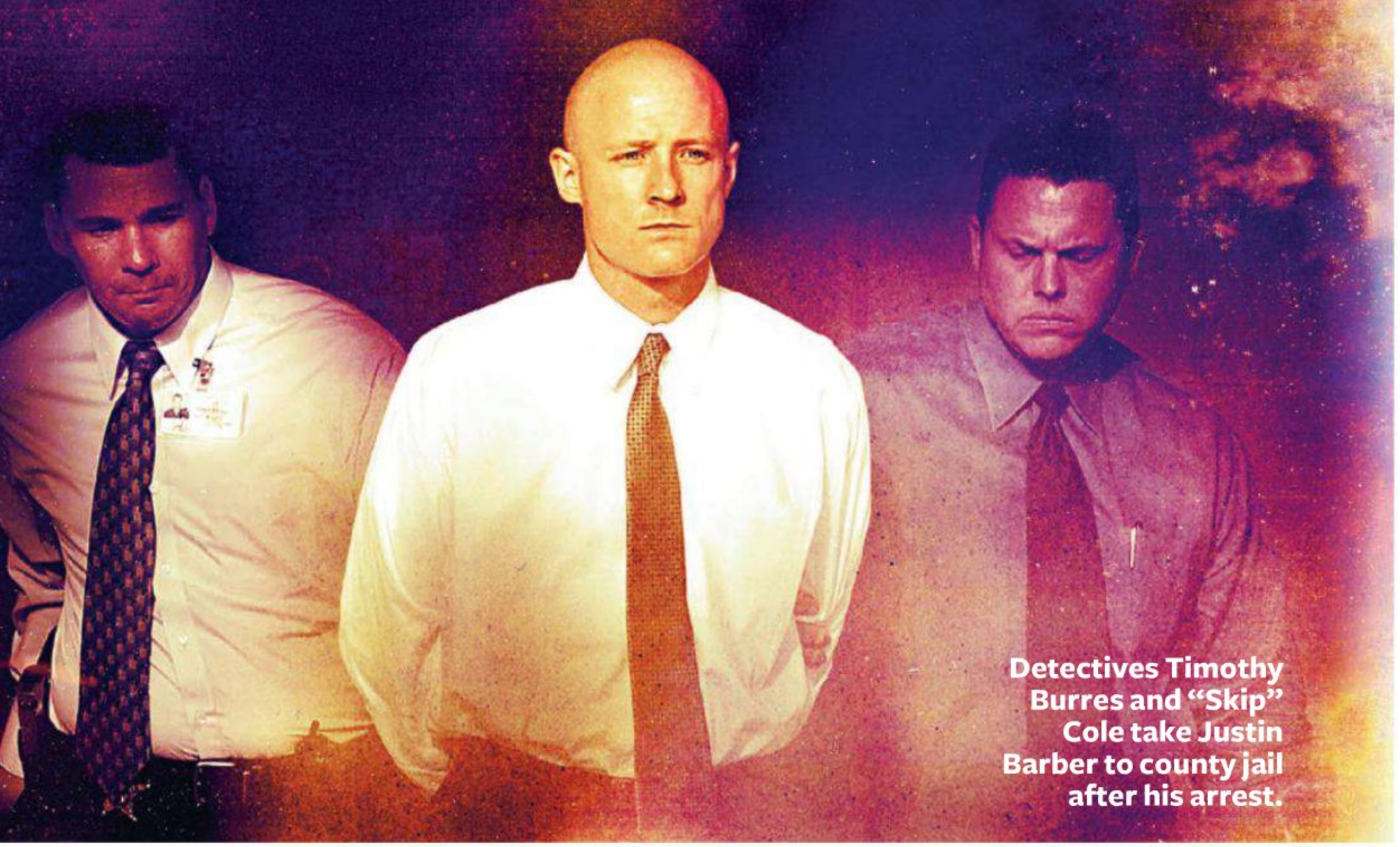
Cole and his team probed the couple's financial records and Justin's computer files. They analyzed bloodstains, ballistics, and the abrasions on April's body. By July 2004, they had enough evidence to take Justin into custody, but it took another two years of spadework—and advancements in computer forensics—before they were ready to go to trial.

THE PROCEEDINGS began on June 12, 2006, in a courthouse in St. Augustine, Florida. Much of what the sleuths had dug up was inadmissible: April's conversations with Nair, for example, and Justin's purchase of a bulletproof chest plate before the killing. Instead, the case turned on a few stark facts.

First, there were the trysts: Justin, it emerged, had carried on at least five during his three-year marriage. Shortly before the killing, he asked Shannon Kennedy to travel with him to California; two days afterward, he stopped by her office and demanded to see her. He pursued her for several more weeks before transferring to Portland, Oregon.

Then there was money: Justin had $58,000 in credit card debt. "The adage is true, even if it's corny," Assistant District Attorney Matt Foxman told the jury. "The defendant has two million reasons to commit this crime."

That took care of motive. As to method, prosecutors argued that Justin had spent a year planning the crime. The most damning evidence



Detectives Timothy Burres and "Skip" Cole take Justin Barber to county jail after his arrest.

came from his laptop. On February 9, 2002, Justin Googled "medical trauma right chest." On Valentine's Day, he tried "gunshot wound right chest." The prosecutor asked, "What are the odds of somebody researching 'gunshot wound to the right chest' and getting a gunshot wound to the right chest six months later?"

On July 19, Justin Googled "Florida divorce" and doubtless discovered that if April dumped him, he could no longer be her beneficiary. And on August 17, an hour before the fatal outing, he downloaded the Guns N' Roses song "Used to Love Her (But I Had to Kill Her)." Foxman played the track in court. Justin, he said, had been psyching himself up for murder.

Finally, there was the crime-scene evidence. Justin claimed he hauled April from the water after she was shot, carrying her in at least nine different positions. Yet the blood on her face all flowed in one direction, suggesting she had been shot on the walkway and left there to die. Foam at her nose and mouth indicated that she'd suffered a "near-drowning episode" before the shooting.

Foxman laid out his theory: Justin intended to shoot April, load her corpse in the car, and drive off in search of "help." The scheme went awry when she tried to run. He held her underwater until she stopped struggling, then dragged her to the walkway, where he shot her and himself. The plan derailed again when his pain kept him from carrying her farther. Justin had to modify his tactics, Foxman said, but his strategy never changed: "He wanted the $2 million, he wanted sympathy for

PETER WILLOTT/THE *RECORD*/AP PHOTO

being shot, and he wanted to look like a hero who'd tried to save his wife. He wanted it all."

JUSTIN'S ATTORNEY, Robert Willis, gamely offered alternative interpretations for each scrap of evidence. But Justin's behavior in a different courtroom three years earlier may ultimately have swayed the jury.

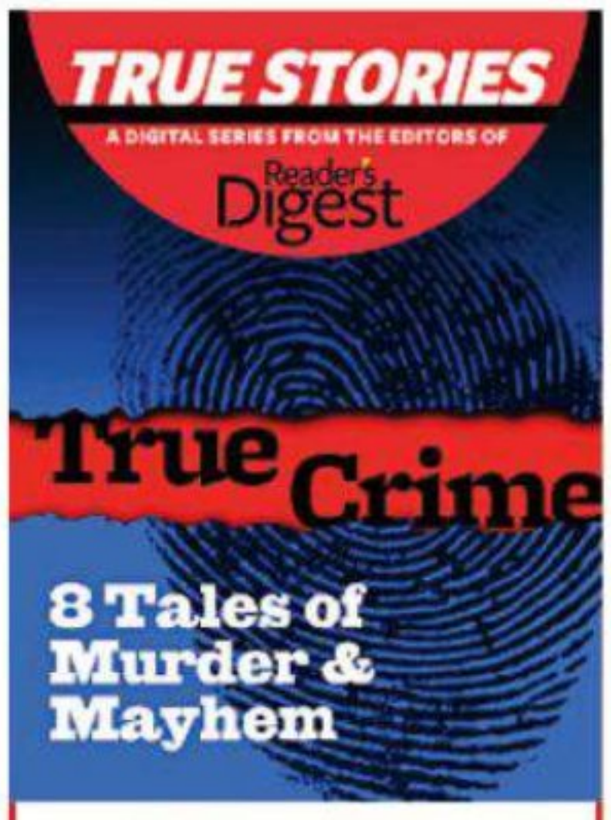
Midway through the first-degree premeditated murder trial, prosecutors played a video deposition Justin gave in 2003 as part of a civil case concerning insurance proceeds. On the tape, the plaintiffs' attorney grills Justin on the attack, his affairs, his sex life with April. He claims not to remember some key details but answers even the most disturbing questions with uncanny calm. His mouth is set in a downward curve, and he dabs his eyes once. Otherwise, he shows little emotion. When the lawyer asks him to recall the high points of his marriage, Justin says tersely, "We were in love." Pressed for details, he says, "I don't recall specifically."

He seemed equally unmoved when the jurors of the criminal trial, after 33 hours of deliberation, announced their verdict: guilty. His supporters wept, as did April's mourners. Justin barely blinked, even when the jury recommended the death penalty a week later. (Judge Edward Hedstrom later sentenced him to life without parole.) Such detachment is a classic symptom of sociopathy, says University of Texas psychologist Shari Julian, an expert on the disorder.

"The true mark of a sociopath is that he always wears a mask," Julian says. They tend to be intelligent, charismatic, and monstrously manipulative.

"He's a very gentle person," says Justin's mother, Linda, who still believes in his innocence. "A good guy."

But Amber Mitchell rejoices that the mask is off at last. "This has been a long, horrible chapter in our lives," she says. "I want the jury to know they got it right." ■



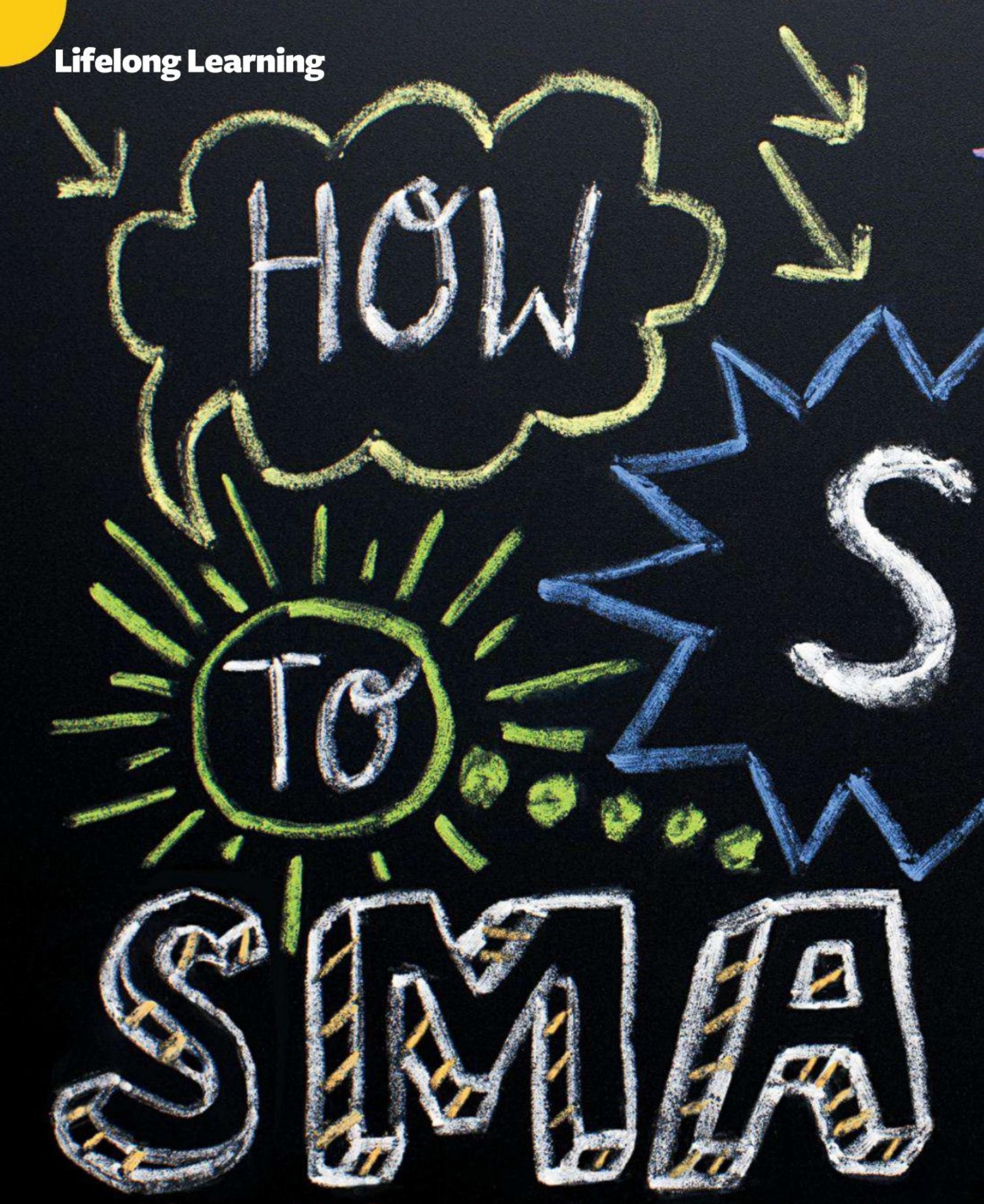
New E-Book!

Our true crime book, a compilation of the most gripping stories we've published, is now on sale at amazon.com, googleplay.com, nook.com, and the iTunes Store.

THE PERFECT PRESENT

My grandma always says that she never gets any phone calls. So for her birthday, I put one of those "How's my driving?" bumper stickers on her car. The phone's pretty much ringing off the hook now.

Comedian *Chris Hobbs*



In this world of OMG and autocorrect, does most confounding rules will restore your

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WORD POWER SPECIAL

SOUND BITES

grammar stand a chance? Our guide to the love of language.

BY PAUL SILVERMAN & SARAH WHARTON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIMOTHY GOODMAN

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ROOT RIVALRY

You never mean: preventative
You always mean: preventive
Why: Grammar sovereign H. W. Fowler banned the long form almost a hundred years ago. So someone who is health conscious might seek preventive care; responsible homeowners might take preventive measures to keep their roof from leaking.

You almost never mean: infamous
You almost always mean: famous
Why: The rich and famous are widely known (and wealthy). But the rich and infamous have a reputation of the worst kind (... and money, which doubtless has dubious origins). Another way to look at it: Unless Aunt Donna's chocolate chip cookies are notoriously evil and disgraceful, they are famous, not infamous.

You might say: evoke
You might mean: invoke
Why: A photograph evokes emotion; a joke evokes laughter—*evoke* means "to elicit or call forth." Save *invoke* for when you mean "to call on a higher power, petition for support, or implement" (for example, "Allison invoked Robert Frost for her first assignment" or "The principal invoked the aid of the teachers").

REDUNDANCIES TO AVOID

- Pooled together
- Unfilled vacancy
- Refer back
- Consensus of opinion
- Center around (read: center on)
- Absolute necessity
- Merge together
- Serious crisis
- Closely scrutinize
- Pair of twins
- Future plans
- Visible to the eye
- Surrounded on all sides

You might say: denounce
You might mean: renounce
Why: The two may sound similar, but their meanings are distinct: *Denounce* is "to condemn publicly or accuse formally" ("The judge denounced the CEO for insider trading"), while

CHALKBOARD PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSHUA SCOTT

renounce means "to give up or refuse to follow" ("The CEO renounced his not-guilty plea").

You might say: uninterested
You might mean: disinterested
Why: Careful speakers who wish to convey a lack of bias want to use *disinterested*. Speakers who don't care about such grammatical subtleties are uninterested.

GRAMMAR 101

You never mean: "Jane, Andrew, and myself are going ..."
You always mean: "Jane, Andrew, and I are going ..."
Why: *Myself* is notoriously misused for *I* or *me*, often because people are trying (too hard, it seems) to sound smarter (wrong: "My husband and myself have belonged to the country club for years"). *Myself* is a pronoun best reserved for reflexive uses (when an action is directed toward the subject: "For Christmas, I gave myself a gift") or for emphasis ("I myself have done that many times").

You might say: former
You might mean: latter
Why: The difference is clear-cut, yet writers and speakers sometimes muff these two: Simply, *former* is the first of two; *latter* is the second. (And while we're at it, *formerly* vs. *formally*: The former means "at an earlier time," as in "Formerly the governor of California, Schwarzenegger ..."; the latter means "by an established form or structure," as in "The school is formally called the University of California at Los Angeles.")

You almost never mean: neither/either are
You almost always mean: neither/either is
Why: Both *neither* and *either* are singular pronouns and should take a singular verb. Confusion sets in when the verb appears far from its subject or when a plural object falls after it: "Turns out, neither of the usually mischievous dogs were [read: *was*] responsible for tearing up the pillows; the cat was to blame."

CONFUSED & MISUSED

You never mean: fall between the cracks
You always mean: fall through the cracks
Why: Logically speaking, you can't fall between an opening; you fall into or through it. As such, don't let logic fall through the cracks when you use this idiom.

You might say: mute
You might mean: moot
Why: *Moot*'s most common meaning is "deprived of practical significance." *Mute* means silent. So while they might want to be mute about a moot point, careful speakers will be vocal about the difference.

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TOP TEN SONG TITLES WRECKED BY GOOD GRAMMAR

10. "I Feel Well"
9. "Whom Are You Going to Call? (Ghostbusters)"
8. "A Whole Lot of Shaking Going On"
7. "There Is No Sunshine"
6. "I Still Haven't Found for What I've Been Looking"
5. "Whom Do You Love?"
4. "What Does Love Have to Do with It?"
3. "Rocket Person" (our gender-sensitive choice)
2. "Bobby McGee and I"
1. "I Can't Get Any Satisfaction"

You almost never mean:
just desserts
You almost always mean:
just deserts
Why: When you want someone to get what he deserves, you hope he reaps his just deserts. But on her birthday, a particularly well-behaved three-year-old might be allowed to indulge in just desserts.

You never mean: modern-day
You always mean: modern
Why: Quite simply, *modern* covers it. *Modern-day* is a redundant term. Modern speakers will sound smarter by using the superior word.

You might write:
so-called "good grammar"
You mean to write:
so-called good grammar
Why: *So-called* introduces a term as falsely, improperly, or commonly referred to as something. So by default, it covers the need for quotation marks (or a speaker's air quotes).

SHADES OF MEANING

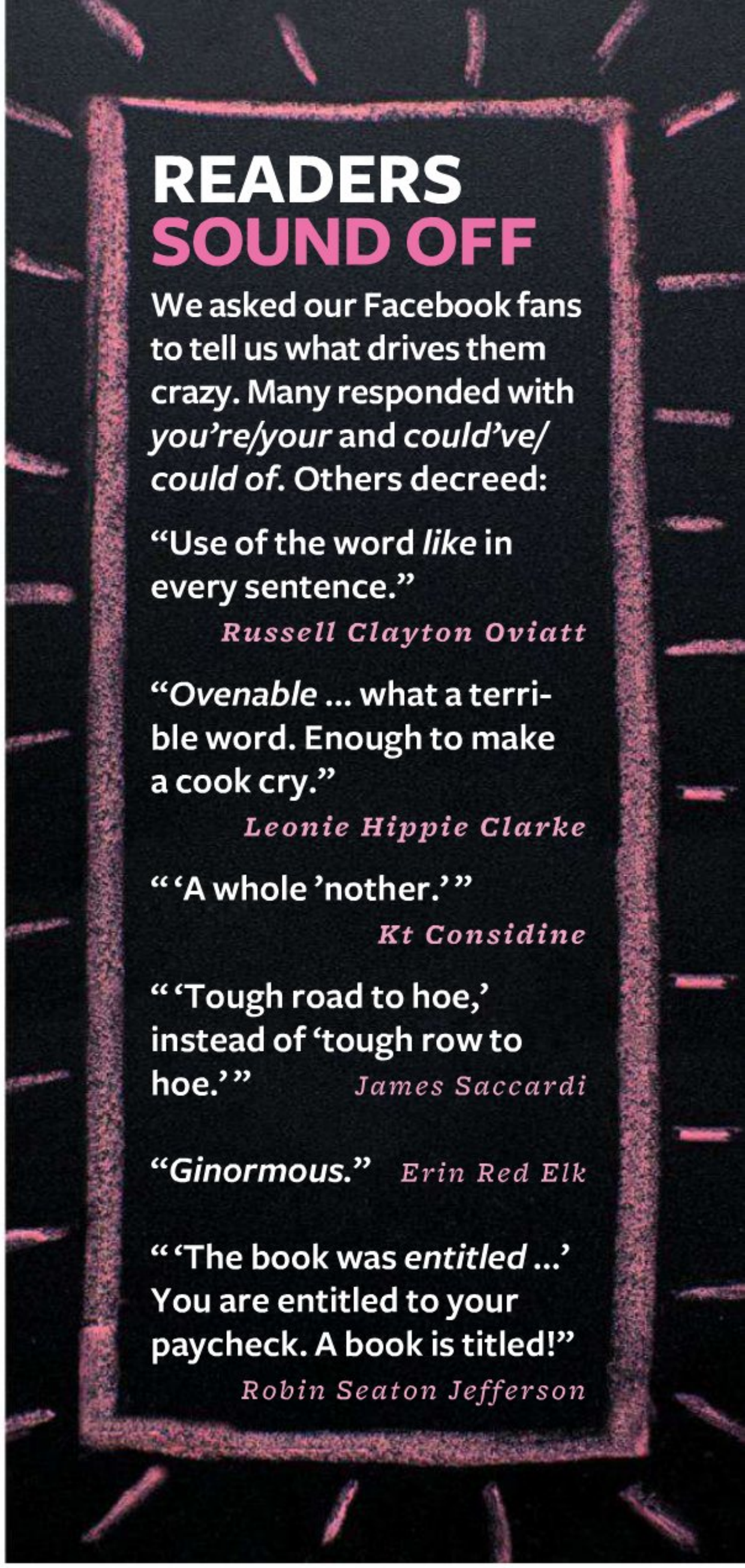
You might say: exuberant
You might mean: exorbitant
Why: While both mean "extreme," the terms are often confused in relation to money. *Exuberant* refers to unrestrained enthusiasm or flamboyance; *exorbitant* means "exceeding an appropriate amount." Another way to look at it: Exuberant

use of a credit card leads to an exorbitant bill down the road.

You might say: come
You might mean: go
Why: *Come* refers to movement toward the speaker (Henri says, "Come to Paris!"); *go* denotes the opposite (After you've stayed two months, Henri says, "You should go"). But idiomatic use sometimes clouds this rule, as "I'll come over" is more comprehensible than "I'll go over."

You might say: jealous
You might mean: envious
Why: Great grammarian Bryan Garner reminds us that "*jealousy* connotes feelings of resentment toward another, particularly in matters relating to an intimate relationship," while "*envy* refers to covetousness of another's advantages, possessions, or abilities." So your ex is jealous of your new boyfriend but envious of your ability to use these two terms correctly.

For more ways to sound smarter and to get an animated version of this story, download the *Reader's Digest* app for your iPad or Kindle Fire.


READERS SOUND OFF
We asked our Facebook fans to tell us what drives them crazy. Many responded with *you're/your* and *could've/could of*. Others decreed:
"Use of the word *like* in every sentence." *Russell Clayton Oviatt*
"*Ovenable* ... what a terrible word. Enough to make a cook cry." *Leonie Hippie Clarke*
"'A whole 'nother.'" *Kt Considine*
"'Tough road to hoe,' instead of 'tough row to hoe.'" *James Saccardi*
"*Ginormous.*" *Erin Red Elk*
"'The book was *entitled* ...' You are entitled to your paycheck. A book is titled!" *Robin Seaton Jefferson*

WEDDED BLITZ

I'm single. I often think about my future wife and how lax she's been about getting in touch with me. Comedian *Ted Alexandro*

I've been married four years now, and it's getting pretty serious. Comedian *Nate Bargatze*

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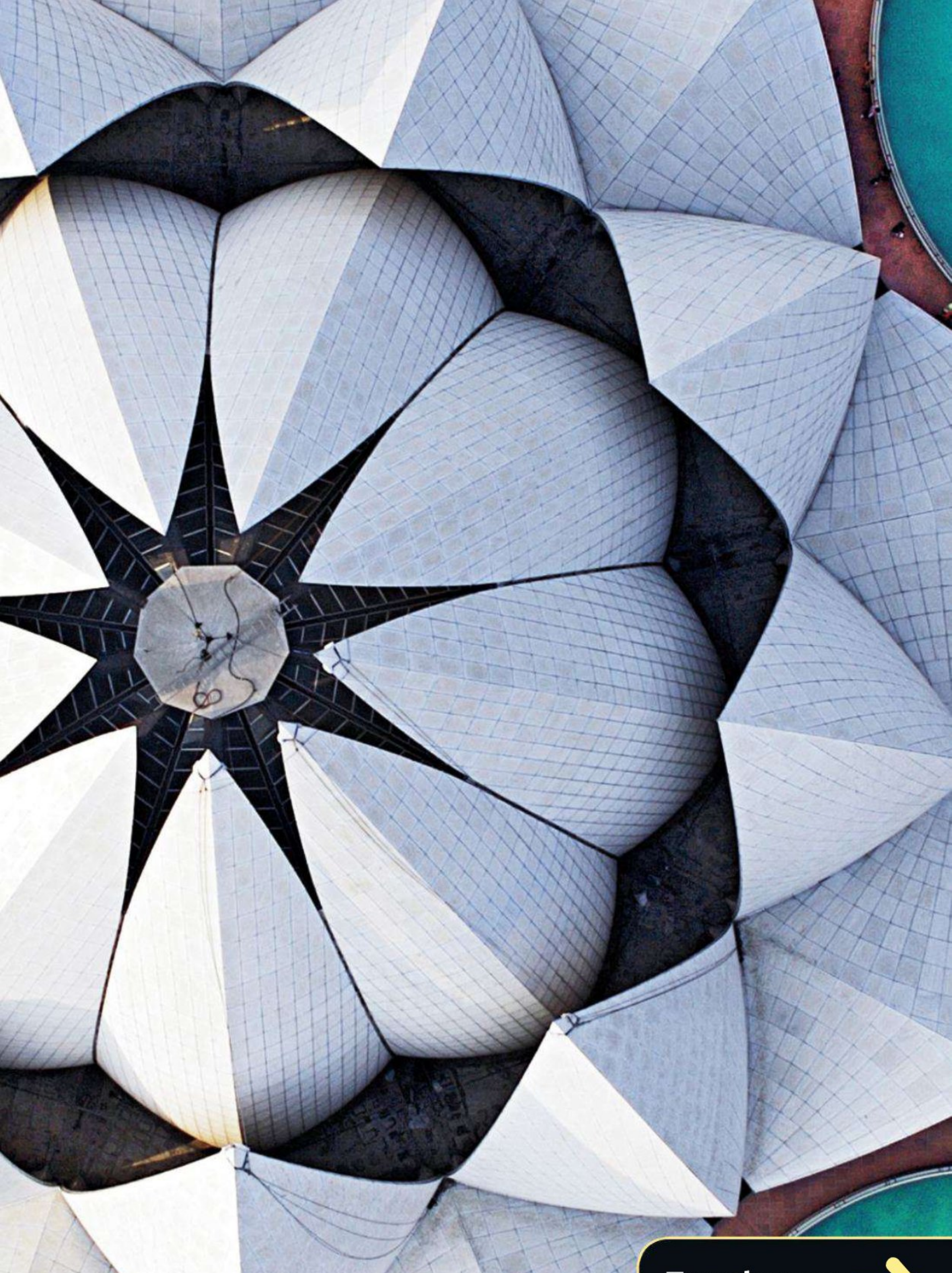
Look Twice

See the World ...



Turn the page

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... Differently

If this magnificent structure puts you in mind of a flower, that's by design. The Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India, is known as the Lotus Temple: It's composed of 27 marble "petals" surrounded by nine ponds. Designed by Iranian-born architect Fariborz Sahba (who now lives in Canada), the temple has attracted tens of millions of visitors since opening in 1986. Photographer Nicolas Chorier shot these images from a camera affixed to a remote-controlled kite.

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Scam Nation!

FRAUD IS ON THE RISE AS CROOKS UPDATE OLD TRICKS AND CREATE NEW ONES. TEN CONS TO WATCH OUT FOR—AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF.

FROM *Consumer Reports*

T

The economy may be struggling, but the fraud business is booming. Although comprehensive data aren't kept, the fingerprints of a crime wave are all over. Fraud and identity-theft complaints tracked by the Federal Trade Commission topped 1.2 million last year, up 19 percent over 2010 and more than 450 percent since 2001.

Moreover, the FBI says fraud involving investments, mortgages, and the Internet is growing.

"Fraud is as high as it's ever been because the scam artists are using brand-new channels and technology that didn't exist 15 years ago," says Martha Deevy, director of the Financial Fraud Research Center at Stanford University's Center on Longevity. It is estimated that the measurable direct cost of financial fraud to Americans is $40 billion to $50 billion a year.

Experts also say the need for law enforcement to pursue terrorists has shifted FBI resources from fraud cases. "After 9/11, the scammers realized, 'This is our time,'" says Doug Templeton, chief investigator for the Pinellas County (Florida) Department of Justice & Consumer Services.

Like a good novel, a scam is all about the story. It must be convincing and, above all, new. Consequently, con artists change their techniques to respond to changing consumer awareness.

We interviewed experts, scoured the complaint files of regulatory and consumer-protection agencies, and followed our readers' tip-offs to present the latest frauds making the rounds—and some of the classics. Here's what you need to know about some of the latest scams and schemes.

JOHN KUCZALA/GETTY IMAGES

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1 WE'LL HELP YOU SAVE ENERGY ... AND LOSE MONEY

A new twist on the home-improvement scam targets folks who want to cut their energy bills with rooftop solar panels or windmills. Solar energy, of course, can reduce your electric bill. But making the big up-front investment can be the equivalent of paying for 30 to 40 years of electricity in advance. And lots of variables can confound payback, including living where cloudy weather is commonplace or in the shadow of towering trees, terrain, or nearby tall buildings.

cies by the Consumer Federation of America and the North American Consumer Protection Investigators.

Protect yourself **California is the leader in residential solar, so go to its electric utility website, at pge.com/csi, to see whether solar makes sense for you. If it does, work only with licensed contractors specializing in solar installation. Conduct an energy audit, and get bids from at least three companies. Check their Better Business Bureau (BBB) rating and references. Never pay the full price up front or a deposit of more than $1,000 or 10 percent of the project price, whichever is smaller.**

SOCIAL-MEDIA NETWORKS LIKE FACEBOOK ARE FERTILE GROUND FOR FAKERY.

Consumers unfamiliar with those caveats give double-dealers an opportunity to lowball costs and talk up savings. The promised best-case scenario can lure you into paying a big deposit to a contractor who skips town or otherwise never delivers the system or savings. Some victims have been burned for several thousand dollars. Home-improvement companies are the third-most complained-about businesses, according to the latest survey of consumer-protection agen-

2 TRY OUR USELESS TECH SUPPORT

Some scoundrels fly under the radar via telephone. A tech-support person, purportedly from a trusted company like Dell or Microsoft, calls to warn you that its security systems have remotely detected a virus on your computer and offers to remove it—for a fee of $100 or more.

Of course, there is no virus, so you pay for unnecessary service. The crook may also take the opportunity

to install mock antivirus software that later starts "finding" nonexistent malware. That can cost you a bundle for removal. Worse, the tech may also install software that scans your computer to steal your passwords and hijack your computer to generate ads and spread spam.

Protect yourself **Hang up on anyone outside your home who claims to find trouble on your PC. Install legitimate antivirus and anti-malware software, and keep it up-to-date.**

3 TAKE OUR BOGUS SURVEY

Social-media networks are fertile ground for fakery. You might have received, for example, newsfeed messages from Facebook friends raving about an app that claims to let you see who's checking out your profile. Such messages can be spam in disguise, leading to "bait pages" where you're asked to "like" the app, which forwards the spam to all your friends. Then you have to complete a survey, which collects personal information and opinions.

The goal is to trick you into filling out surveys for online advertisers, with the person who set up the operation collecting commissions for each one completed, says Chet Wisniewski, senior security adviser at Sophos, an information security firm.

There's a difference between scam surveys and legitimate surveys. Legitimate surveys link you directly to the questionnaire; you don't need to hit "like" first. And your responses are confidential; they aren't used for marketing or fund-raising.

Protect yourself **Don't reveal personal information online to anyone who initiated contact with you unless your trust is certain. Look for the survey company's name and go to its website independently by reopening your browser, or call the company. Ignore product promos from Facebook friends. Use caution in granting access to your profile. And think before you "like."**

4 LET US PRETEND TO LOWER YOUR CREDIT CARD INTEREST RATES

An unsolicited caller falsely implying that he's affiliated with your credit card issuer offers to reduce your interest rate and save you $2,500. The service costs $695 up front, and you must fill out a "financial profile form" with details about your debts, including balances, credit limits, interest rates, and customer-service numbers, plus your name, address, and Social Security number.

The full extent of the "service" typically involves a conference call with the thief, victim, and creditors, during which the shark asks for a rate reduction and the creditor usually refuses. Consumers, of course, can do this on their own—free. One such operation, Select Personnel Management, a Canadian company, and nine associated companies and defendants were ordered by a U.S. District Court in Illinois in 2009 to pay more than $7.8 million and stop telemarketing

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after the FTC said they hoodwinked some 12,000 consumers.

Protect yourself Don't give personal information such as account numbers to anyone who initiates contact with you. Go to donotcall.gov or call 888-382-1222 to register your phone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry. Hang up on unsolicited telemarketers.

5 THANKS FOR DOWNLOADING OUR MALWARE

You get an e-mail notifying you about airline reservations you didn't make, a package from UPS you weren't expecting, or a problem with your bank account. Just click on this link.

If you follow the instructions, you might end up downloading malware designed to take control of your computer and turn it into a spamming robot, harm it with a virus, or mine your files for financial information. Following the link will take you to a site that looks real but is fake. When you log in, it captures your username and password so that the bad guys can get into your real accounts.

For years, those threats were limited to your PC, which should be protected with security software. But the popularity of smart phones has opened the door to "smishing." (The word combines *SMS*, or "short-message service"—aka text messaging—and *phishing*.) Some smart-phone users don't realize that their device is prone to the same risks as a PC.

Protect yourself Never click on a link to your online accounts through e-mail or call an account-related phone number in a text message that someone sends you. Instead, open your PC or mobile Web browser and type in the desired address on your own. And don't click on an e-mail attachment unless you're expecting it.

6 HI, GRANDMA, I NEED MONEY FAST

It's the phone call every grandparent dreads: bad news about a grandchild coming in the middle of the night. Maybe there's been a car accident, or the kin has been unjustly arrested, or maybe a family member has been mugged overseas. The caller may attempt to impersonate the grandchild, a police officer, or a doctor. Whatever the details, the family elder needs to wire money ASAP.

The caller, however, is not a relative but a cheat who'll collect the untraceable wire transfer you might send. This dirty deal has been working since 2008 at least, but scammers have lately become more sophisticated, mining social-networking sites for personal details that make their calls more credible. One couple was pinched first for $3,000 when their "grandson" was supposedly caught fishing in Canada without a license, then for a whopping $30,000 more when the drama escalated to Mounties finding drugs and alcohol on the boat.

Protect yourself Ask for details about your last visit that your grandkid should recall and a stranger couldn't. Jot down the caller's location and number. Hang up, and instead of calling Western Union, call the grandchild's parents or the number

JOHN KUCZALA/GETTY IMAGES

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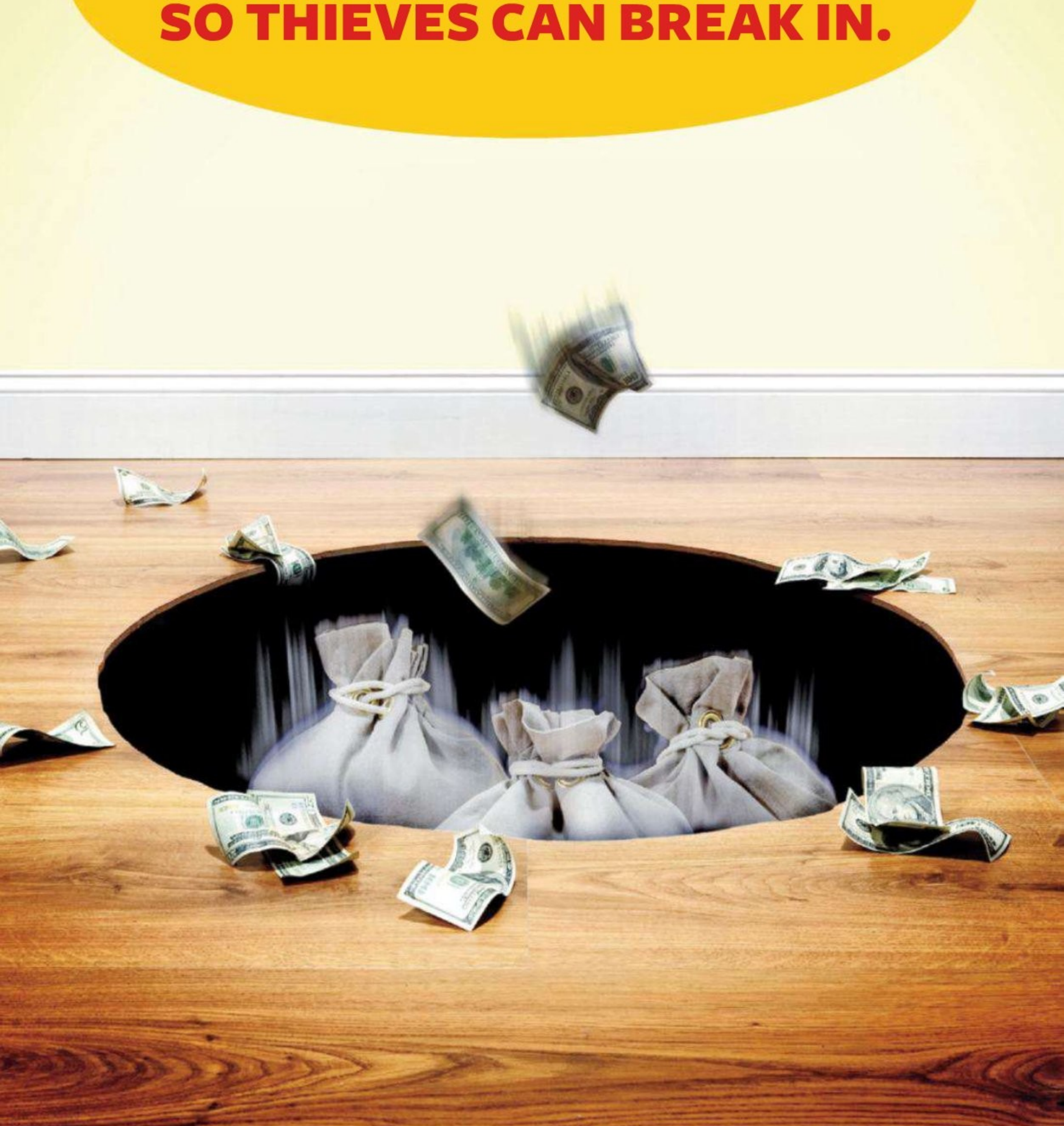
ONE SCAM LURES VICTIMS AWAY FROM THE HOUSE SO THIEVES CAN BREAK IN.



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you usually use to reach him to verify his whereabouts—even if the caller pleads, "Don't call my parents!" Don't send a dime unless you confirm the story.

7 YOU NEED OUR PHONY INVESTMENT ADVICE

Investment advisers, broker-dealers, and people from other financial-services firms invite wealthy seniors to enjoy fun, food, and access to investment secrets that will add $100,000 to their net worth, get them 40 percent investment returns, or turn $100,000 into $1 million for their heirs. Attendees might receive a sleeve of golf balls or even win golf clubs.

The main goal of this educational "opportunity" is to sell investment products that generate commissions for promoters, mostly annuities, real estate investment trusts, mutual funds, and reverse mortgages. That's all perfectly legal.

But the ads, sales materials, and pitchmen can be misleading or promote strategies inappropriate for seniors. Reported problems have included promises of a 38 percent rate of return with no risk, the liquidation of investments without the customer's knowledge or consent, the misappropriation of customers' funds to buy unregistered oil and gas partnerships, and the sale of nonexistent investments to pay a salesman's personal expenses and trading losses.

Protect yourself **Deal only with long-time, trusted financial advisers, never with new "friends" from a rubber-chicken sales seminar. Accept the invite and fun, but provide zero financial information, and don't sign blank authorization forms or anything else. And just say no to follow-up one-on-one meetings that will probably be suggested on the pretense of preparing a financial plan.**

8 YOUR REAL PRIZE IS A BREAK-IN

In this new bamboozle, burglars claiming to be from a local store call to tell you that you've just won a $100 gift card, and you must come in to pick it up.

The game is to get you out of the house so that robbers can carry out an old-fashioned break-in while you're gone.

Protect yourself **This simple trick works because it catches you by surprise. Always be suspicious when someone promises you something for nothing. The BBB, which first warned about this scam, advises "winners" to ask questions: What contest did I win? How was I chosen? Call the store to confirm the details. After you determine that it's a scam, notify the police. And take extra precautions to lock up your house, set your alarms, and protect valuables when you do leave.**

9 WHAT'S YOUR CELL PHONE NUMBER?

Hot electronics are commonly used to entice victims into a shakedown. A pop-up ad on your computer invites you to bid on an iPad, a laptop PC, or a wide-screen TV, but you must include your cell phone number

to play. Submitting your bid sends a text message to your cell phone that, whether you respond or not, may authorize an unwanted $9.99-a-month subscription to some useless service. The charge gets tacked onto your cell phone bill, where you're unlikely to notice it.

The auction is smoke and mirrors designed to capture your cell phone number to place unauthorized charges on your bill, a practice called cramming. Cell phone numbers aren't published in directories, so scammers must be underhanded to get them.

Cell phone companies, which can collect $1 to $2 commissions per charge, claim that wireless cramming isn't a problem. But we found 480,000 alleged cell-cramming victims in one case, and in 2011, a Senate committee investigation concluded that landline and cell phone crammers could be fleecing up to $2 billion a year from consumers.

Protect yourself **Guard your cell phone number like a credit card; don't give it to strangers. Demand refunds from your cell provider if you've been crammed. Tell your wireless and landline carriers to block all third-party billing to your account.**

10 APPLY FOR THIS NONEXISTENT JOB TODAY!

Last May, job hunters using computers at a public library in Columbus, Ohio, were approached by a "recruiter" from a new store nearby. Candidates filled out applications with their name, date of birth, Social Security number, and more.

When the applicants went to the store, they learned that the recruiter was a brazen ID thief using face-to-face job interviews to extract info.

Job scams rank in the top ten on the BBB's scams list. Such come-ons also involve work-at-home schemes including stuffing envelopes and reshipping what the victim may not know are stolen goods.

Protect yourself **Never give personal information to anyone who telephones, e-mails, texts, or otherwise initiates contact with you. Don't participate in online pop-up quizzes that ask for your mother's maiden name or other details commonly used to verify identity. If someone approaches you with a job, contact the prospective employer to make sure the recruiter and job opening are legitimate.** ■

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FRANKLY, I KEEP IT ALL ON MY IPAD

[Kids] don't have backpacks anymore; they all have that rolling luggage thing now. Every time they get home, it looks like they're checking into a hotel. "Hi, how are ya? What time does the shuttle leave for soccer?"

Comedian *John Heffron*

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I Am Nujood, Age 10 and Divorced

When her family would not help her escape the horror her life had become, this Yemeni child acted on her own

FROM THE BOOK BY NUJOOD ALI, WITH DELPHINE MINOUI

DELPHINE MINOUI

Nujood's nightmare began when her father promised her to a man who said he would not touch her.

My head is spinning—I've never seen so many people. In the yard outside the courthouse, a crowd is bustling in every direction. No one sees me: I'm too small for them. I'm only ten years old, maybe not even that. Who knows?

PEOPLE SAY JUDGES are the ones who help people in need. So I have to find one and tell him my story. I'm exhausted. It's hot under my veil, I have a headache, and I'm so ashamed.

I spy a group of men in uniforms. If they see me, they might arrest me. A little girl running away from home. Trembling, I discreetly latch on to the first passing veil, hoping to get the attention of the woman it conceals. "I want to talk to the judge."

Two big eyes framed in black stare at me in surprise.

"What judge are you looking for?"

"Take me to a judge—it doesn't matter which one!"

She stares at me, astonished.

"Follow me," the woman finally says. The door opens onto a room full of people, and at the far end, behind a desk, a thin-faced man with a mustache. It's the judge at last. I sit down, rest my head against the back of the chair, and await my turn.

"And what can I do for you?" A man's voice rouses me from my dozing. It is a curiously gentle voice. I rub my face and recognize, standing in front of me, the judge with the mustache. The room is almost empty.

"I want a divorce."

The Agreement

In Khardji, the village in Yemen where I was born, women are not taught how to make choices. When she was about 16, Shoya, my mother, married my father, Ali Mohammad al-Ahdel, without protest. And when he decided four years later to choose a second wife, my mother obediently accepted his decision. It was with that same resignation that I at first agreed to my marriage, without realizing what was at stake. At my age, you don't ask yourself many questions.

Omma—Mama—gave birth to me the way she delivered all her 16 children: at home. I grew up watching Omma take care of the house and itching for the day I would be old enough to tag along with my two big sisters when they fetched water from the spring. I was two or three years old when a violent dispute broke out

Nujood (third from left) poses at home in 2008 with her mother (behind her), her father (in white shirt and jacket), and seven of her 15 siblings.

between my father and the other villagers. We had to leave right away.

Our arrival in Sana'a was a shock. The capital was a blur of dust and noise. We moved into a slum building in the Al-Qa neighborhood. My father finally landed a job as a sweeper for the sanitation authority.

In the neighborhood school, I'd done very well my first year and had just begun my second. One February evening in 2008, Aba—Papa—told me he had some good news.

"Nujood, you are to be married."

The news came out of nowhere. I didn't really understand. At first I felt almost relieved because life at home had become impossible. Aba had never been able to find full-time employment after losing his street-sweeper job, so we were always late with the rent. My brothers joined the street vendors who tap on car windshields at red lights, hoping to sell a packet of tissues for coins. Then it was my sister Haïfa's and my turn to try it. I didn't like that.

More often now, Aba was spending his afternoons chewing khat with neighbors. He claimed it helped him forget his troubles. It was during one of those khat sessions that a

DELPHINE MINOUI

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man of about 30 had approached him.

"I would like our families to be united," the man had said.

His name was Faez Ali Thamer, and he worked as a deliveryman. Like us, he came from Khardji, and he was looking for a wife. My father accepted his proposal. As next in line after my two sisters, I was the logical one to be married off.

That evening, I overheard a conversation between [my sister] Mona and our father.

"Nujood is too young to get married," Mona insisted.

"It's the best way to protect her. She won't be raped by a stranger and become the prey of evil rumors. This man seems honest. He has promised not to touch Nujood until she's older. Besides, we haven't enough money to feed the whole family."

My mother never said a thing. She seemed sad but resigned. In our country, it's the men who give the orders.

My Wedding

My wedding preparations moved rapidly ahead, and I soon realized my misfortune when my future husband's family decided that I must leave school. I loved school. It was my refuge, a happiness all my own.

On my wedding day, my female cousins began to ululate and clap their hands when they caught sight of me arriving. I, however, could hardly see their faces, my eyes were so full of tears.

In the back of the SUV waiting in front of our door, a short man was staring at me. He wore a long white zanna and had a mustache. His short wavy hair was mussed, and his face was poorly shaved. He was not handsome. So this was Faez Ali Thamer!

When the motor rumbled to life and the driver pulled away, I started crying, silently, with my face to the window as I watched Omma grow smaller and smaller.

A woman was waiting for us on the threshold of one of the stone houses in Khardji. I felt immediately that she didn't like me. My new mother-in-law was old, with skin as wrinkled as a lizard's. She gestured me to enter. The inside of the house had hardly any furnishings: four bedrooms, a living room, a tiny kitchen.

I fairly fell upon the rice and meat that his sisters had prepared. After our meal, some grown-ups from the village gathered to chew khat. No one seemed surprised by my tender age. Later I learned that marriages to little girls are not unusual in the countryside. There is even a tribal proverb that says, "To guarantee a happy marriage, marry a nine-year-old girl."

How relieved I felt when they led me to my room. A long woven mat was lying on the floor: my bed. I didn't even need to put out the light to fall asleep.

I would rather never have awakened. When the door crashed open, I was startled awake. I'd barely opened my eyes when I felt a damp, hairy body pressing against me. Someone

had blown out the lamp, leaving the room pitch dark. It was him! I recognized him from that overpowering odor of cigarettes and khat. He began to rub himself against me.

"PLEASE, I'M BEGGING YOU, LEAVE ME ALONE," I GASPED. "YOU ARE MY WIFE!" HE SAID.

"Please, I'm begging you, leave me alone," I gasped.

"You are my wife!"

I leaped to my feet. The door was not completely closed, and spying a glimmer of light, I dashed toward the courtyard.

He ran after me.

"Help! Help!" I shrieked, sobbing.

My voice rang in the night, but it was as if I were shouting into a void. I ran, panting for breath. I stumbled over something and scrambled to my feet to take off again, but arms caught me, held me tightly, wrestled me back into the bedroom, pushed me down on the mat. I felt paralyzed, as if I had been tied down.

Hoping to find a female ally, I called out to my mother-in-law.

"Amma! Auntie!"

There was no reply.

When he took off his tunic, I rolled into a ball to protect myself, but he began pulling at my nightshirt.

I tried to get away again, moaning, "I'll tell my father!"

"You can tell your father whatever you like. He signed the marriage contract."

"You have no right!"

He started to laugh, nastily.

"You are my wife. Now you must do what I want!"

Suddenly it was as if I'd been snatched up by a hurricane, flung around, struck by lightning, and I had no more strength to fight back. Something burning invaded the deepest part of me. No matter how I screamed, no one came to help me. It hurt, awfully. I shrieked one more time, I think, then lost consciousness.

Running Away

had to adjust quickly to a new life. I had no right to leave the house, no right to complain, no right to say no. During the day, I had to obey my mother-in-law's orders: Cut up the vegetables, wash the floor, do the dishes. Whenever I stopped for a moment, my mother-in-law pulled my hair.

He left every morning and returned right before sunset. Each time I heard him arrive, the same panic seized my heart. When night fell, I knew what would begin again. The same savagery, the same pain and distress. On the third day, he began hitting me, first with his hands, then with a stick. And his mother egged him on.

Whenever he would complain about me, she would tell him, "Hit her even

harder. She must listen to you—she's your wife."

I lived in permanent fear. Whenever I could, I would hide in a corner,

"IF YOU DIVORCE HIM," FATHER SAID, "MY BROTHERS AND COUSINS WILL KILL ME!"

lost and bewildered. One morning, worn down by all my crying, he told me he would allow me to visit my parents. At last!

"Nujood," said my father, "you are a married woman now. You must stay with your husband. If you divorce your husband, my brothers and cousins will kill me! Honor comes first."

I went to see Dowla, my father's second wife, who lived with her five children in a tiny apartment across from our street. I climbed the stairs, holding my nose to avoid the stench of garbage and communal toilets. Dowla opened her door wearing a long red and black dress and a huge smile.

"Nujood! What a surprise to see you again. Welcome!"

I liked Dowla. Tall and slender, she was prettier than Omma, and she never scolded me. The poor woman hadn't had an easy time of it, though. My father neglected her completely. Her poverty forced her to beg in the street.

I poured out my heart to her, and my story seemed to affect her deeply. She thought quietly for a moment, then poured some tea. Handing it to me, she leaned over and looked into my eyes.

"Nujood," she whispered, "if no one will listen to you, you must go straight to court."

"To what?"

"To court!"

But of course! In a flash, I saw images of judges in turbans, lawyers in a hurry, men and women coming to complain about family problems, thefts, squabbles over inheritances. I'd seen a courtroom on a show I used to watch at the neighbors' house.

"Go to the courthouse," Dowla continued. "Ask to see the judge—his job is to help victims."

The next morning, I waited impatiently for my mother to get up. "Nujood," she said, handing over 150 rials, "buy some bread for breakfast."

"Yes, Omma," I replied obediently.

I took the street leading to the corner bakery. At the last minute, however, I changed direction, heading for the main avenue.

I had no idea where the courthouse was, however. I was overwhelmed with anxiety. Huddled by a streetlight, I was trying to collect my thoughts when I caught sight of a taxi. I'd taken such taxis, going to Bab al-Yemen with Mona.

I raised my hand and signaled him to stop.

"I want to go to the courthouse!"

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Shada, Nujood's lawyer, asked the girl, "How did you find the courage to run away?"

HAMED THABIT

The Judge

Judge Abdo cannot conceal his surprise. "You want a divorce?"

"Yes."

"But ... you mean you're married?"

"Yes!"

His features are distinguished. His white shirt sets off his olive skin. But when he hears my reply, his face darkens.

"At your age? How can you already be married?"

Without bothering to answer his question, I repeat in a determined voice: "I want a divorce."

He nervously scratches his mustache. If only he'll agree to save me.

"And why do you want a divorce?" he continues.

I look him straight in the eye. "Because my husband beats me."

It's as if I had slapped him in the face. His expression freezes again. Point-blank, he asks me, "Are you still a virgin?"

I swallow hard. I'm ashamed of talking about these things. But in that same instant, I understand that if I want to win, I must.

"No. I bled."

He's shocked. I can see his surprise, see him trying to conceal his emotions. Then he takes a deep breath and says, "I'm going to help you."

I feel relieved. I watch him grab his

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Nujood (arm up), an excellent student, returned to school after the trial.

phone with his shaking hand. With luck, he'll act quickly, and this evening, I'll be able to go home to my parents and play with my brothers and sisters, just like before. Divorced! Without that dread of finding myself alone, at nightfall, in the same bedroom with him.

A second judge joins us in the room, and he dashes my enthusiasm to bits.

"My child, this might very well take a lot more time than you think. And unfortunately, I cannot promise that you will win."

This second man is Mohammad al-Ghazi, the chief judge. He says he has never seen a case like mine. They explain to me that in Yemen, girls are frequently married off quite young, before the legal age of 15. An ancient tradition, adds Judge Abdo. But to his knowledge, none of these precocious marriages has ever ended in divorce—because no little girl has, until now, showed up at a courthouse.

"We'll have to find a lawyer," Abdo explains.

Do they realize that if I go home without any guarantee, my husband will come get me, and the torture will start all over again?

"I want to get divorced!" I frown fiercely to show I mean it. The sound of my own voice makes me jump.

DELPHINE MINOUI

"We'll find a solution," Al-Ghazi murmurs, straightening his turban.

"It's out of the question, her going home," he continues. A third judge, Abdel Wahed, volunteers to help. His family has room to take me in.

At nine o'clock the following Saturday morning, we were sitting in Abdel Wahed's office at the courthouse with Abdo and Mohammad al-Ghazi. Al-Ghazi was very worried.

"According to Yemeni law, it is difficult for you to file a complaint against your husband and your father," he told me. Like many children born in Yemeni villages, I didn't have a birth certificate, and I was too young to initiate proceedings against anyone. A contract had been signed and approved by the men of my family. According to Yemeni tradition, it was valid.

"For the moment," Mohammad al-Ghazi told his colleagues, "we must act quickly. I suggest we place Nujood's father and husband under temporary arrest. If we want to protect her, it's better to have them in prison than at liberty."

"NUJOOD, I WON'T ABANDON YOU," SHADA WHISPERS TO ME. I FEEL SAFE WITH HER.

Prison! Would Aba ever forgive me? I was consumed with shame and guilt.

The next three days, I spent most of my time at the courthouse, hoping for a miracle. How many times would I have to go there? Abdo had warned me that my case was most unusual. But what do judges do when faced with one like that?

I am learning the answer from Shada. People say she is one of the best lady lawyers in Yemen who fights for women's rights. She's beautiful and smells of jasmine. As soon as I saw her, I liked her. She doesn't cover her face. Shada wears a long, black, silky coat, with just a colored scarf on her head.

When she came to me the first time, I saw how she looked at me with great emotion before exclaiming, "Heavens!" Then she checked her watch, opened her appointment book, and rearranged her heavy schedule, calling family, friends, and colleagues; several times I heard her say, "I have to take on a very important case."

"Nujood, I won't abandon you," she whispers to me. I feel safe with her. She knows how to find exactly the right words, and her lilting voice comforts me.

The Divorce

The great day has arrived sooner than expected. The courtroom is full. Shada's media campaign has paid off—I have never seen so many cameras.

Beneath my black scarf, I'm perspiring heavily.

Deep down I feel frozen solid, unable to move. Just how does a divorce happen? What if the monster simply says no? If he begins threatening the judge?

I shiver: I recognize Aba and ... the monster, escorted by two soldiers. The prisoners look furious. Passing in front of us, the monster lowers his eyes, then abruptly turns back to Shada.

"I WAS GENTLE," SAID THE MONSTER. "THAT'S NOT TRUE!" I YELLED IN ANGER.

"Proud of yourself, hey?" he snarls.

Shada doesn't even blink. The look in her eyes reveals all the contempt she feels for him. I've learned a lot from her.

"Don't listen to him," she tells me.

My heart pounds. When I look up, I find myself staring into Aba's eyes. He seems so upset. "Honor," he had said. Seeing his face, I begin to understand what that very complicated word means. I can see in my Aba's eyes that he's angry and ashamed at the same time. I'm so furious at him, but I can't help feeling sorry for him too. The respect of other men—that's so important here.

It's Judge Abdo's turn to speak.

"Here we have the case of a little girl who was married without her consent. Once the marriage contract was signed without her knowledge, she was taken away by force into the province of Hajja. There her husband sexually abused her, when she hadn't reached the age of puberty and was not ready for sexual relations. He also struck and insulted her. She has come here today to ask for a divorce."

The big moment is coming, when the guilty are punished.

Al-Ghazi raps the desk a few times with a small wooden hammer.

"Listen to me carefully," he tells the creature I hate. "You married this little girl two months ago, you slept with her, you struck her. Is that true, yes or no?"

The monster blinks, then replies, "No, it isn't true! She and her father agreed to this marriage."

I clutch at Shada's coat.

"He's lying!"

The judge turns to my father.

"Did you agree to the marriage?"

"Yes."

"How old is your daughter?"

"My daughter is 13."

Thirteen? No one ever told me I was 13. I wring my hands, trying to calm down.

"I married off my daughter for fear she would be stolen."

I don't really understand what he is talking about. His answers are vague and complicated, and the judge's questions are increasingly

incomprehensible. Voices are raised. The accused men defend themselves. The uproar in the room grows louder as my heart pounds faster.

The judge motions for us to follow him into another room, away from the public. "Faez Ali Thamer, did you consummate the marriage, yes or no?" asks the judge.

I hold my breath.

"Yes," admits the monster. "But I was gentle with her, I was careful. I did not beat her."

His answer is like a slap in the face, reminding me of all those other slaps, the insults, the suffering.

"That's not true!" I yell, beside myself with anger.

Everyone turns to look at me. But I'm the first to be astonished at my outburst. After that, everything happens quickly. The monster says that my father betrayed him by lying about my age. Then Aba becomes furious and says he had agreed to wait until I was older before touching me. The monster announces that he's ready to accept the divorce, but on one condition: My father must pay back my bride-price. And Aba snaps back that he was never paid anything at all. It's like a marketplace! How much? When? How?

In the end, I am saved by the judge's verdict.

"The divorce is granted," he says.

Postscript

My divorce has changed my life. When I go out in the street, sometimes women call to me, congratulating me. I recently left my uncle's house and returned to live with my parents. We all seem to be pretending to have forgotten what happened.

My nightmares stopped a few weeks ago. Instead, I've been dreaming about school. When I grow up, I'll be a lawyer, like Shada, to defend other little girls like me.

Update: Proceeds from the book about her experience have lifted Nujood and her family out of poverty; they have their own home in Sana'a and a steady income. A friend and adviser of Nujood's says that the now 15-year-old has had trouble adjusting to her celebrity but is studying English and wants to continue her education abroad.

In April 2009, the Yemeni parliament raised the legal age of consent to 17, but it was overturned the next day. Today, Yemen is in political turmoil, and men can take brides of any age. ■

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CASTING ASPERSIONS

The easiest way to add insult to injury is when you're signing somebody's cast.

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MEMOIR

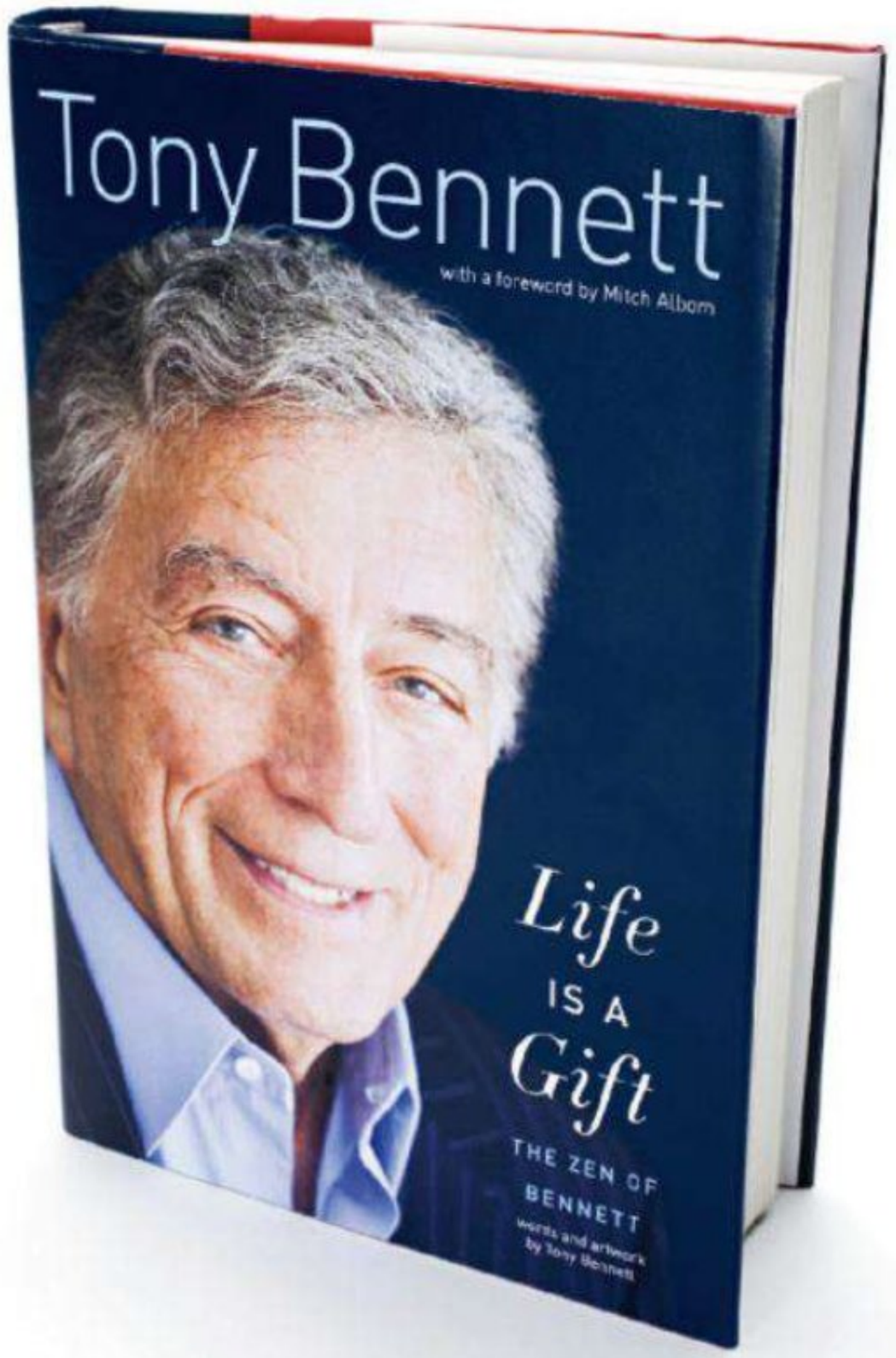
Tony Bennett's Grace Notes

Life Is a Gift **by Tony Bennett**
(HarperCollins, $28.99)

The singer offers life lessons and delightful anecdotes from an extraordinary career. He answered some questions for *Reader's Digest*:

RD: ***You've been in the entertainment business for more than 60 years, and you're still thriving personally and professionally. If you could give just one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be?***

Bennett: The key to keeping your creativity going is to be true to yourself. I was told when I was starting out that you shouldn't try to imitate someone else, as you will just end up being one of the chorus. I would also advise [young artists] to be patient. It's tough these days because once they have their first success, with the Internet, they are



Singing "The Lady Is a Tramp" with Lady Gaga for his *Duets II* album

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSHUA SCOTT. BOTTOM: JOSH CHEUSE/COLUMBIA RECORDS/AP IMAGES

known around the world. In the days of vaudeville, you had time to "be bad before you got good." I would advise anyone starting out not to rush into hitting it big—take the time to study your craft.

RD: ***You write fondly about working with Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne, Cary Grant, Nat King Cole, and more. Whom among today's young artists do you most admire?***

Bennett: Well, I loved working with Lady Gaga. She is a true artist and at such a young age is so confident. She knows how to expertly communicate with her audience on so many levels. She really has it all. I like to call her the Picasso of today's artists.

RD: ***You've sold millions of albums, and you'd need a very sturdy shelf to hold all the awards. You're also an accomplished visual artist. What do you consider your greatest achievement?***

Bennett: My family. I love the fact that my entire family works with me to this day. My son Danny manages my career, and my other son, Dae, handles the audio production for my recordings. My daughter, Antonia, goes on the road with me and performs at my shows.

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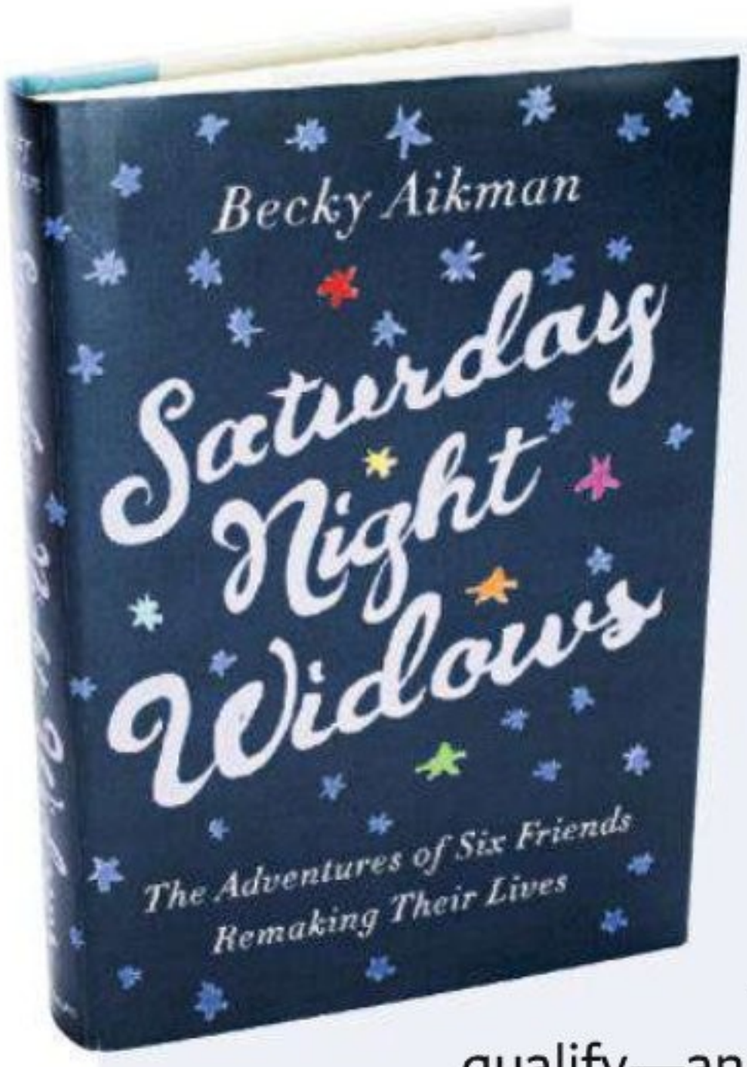

RESILIENCE

LETTING JOY BACK IN

Saturday Night Widows **by Becky Aikman (Crown, $26)**

After losing her husband in her 40s, Aikman couldn't find what she needed in a traditional support group. So she created her own circle of young widows who relied on friendship, practical help, and laughter to help themselves heal. Here's a mini excerpt:

"We would meet on Saturday night, the most treacherous shoal for new widows, where untold spirits have sunk into gloom. We would do something together that we enjoyed, starting small—this dinner would certainly qualify—and ending big, maybe a faraway trip ... If nothing else, these women would provide each other with traveling companions past the milestones of this common but profound transition—the first holidays without a mate, the first time taking off the ring, the first time daring to flirt. We would converge at this most vulnerable, weak, and awkward turning point and pledge to each other that this was not an end, it was a beginning."

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NEW THIS MONTH

FOUR BOOKS FOR WINTRY NIGHTS

The Twelve Tribes of Hattie

by Ayana Mathis (Knopf, $25.95)

This keenly anticipated debut novel is both a single family's drama and an account of the Great Migration of African Americans out of the rural South. Mathis's novel begins in 1925 and moves through the 1980s, relating the titular Hattie's story through her children.

Kind of Kin

by Rilla Askew (Ecco, $25.99)

Set in small-town Oklahoma, Askew's novel centers on a community dealing with harsh new immigration laws and ethical dilemmas. A taste: "'Your grandpa is a felon,' Aunt Sweet said. 'A felon and a Christian. He says he's a felon *because* he's a Christian. Now, what kind of baloney is that?'"

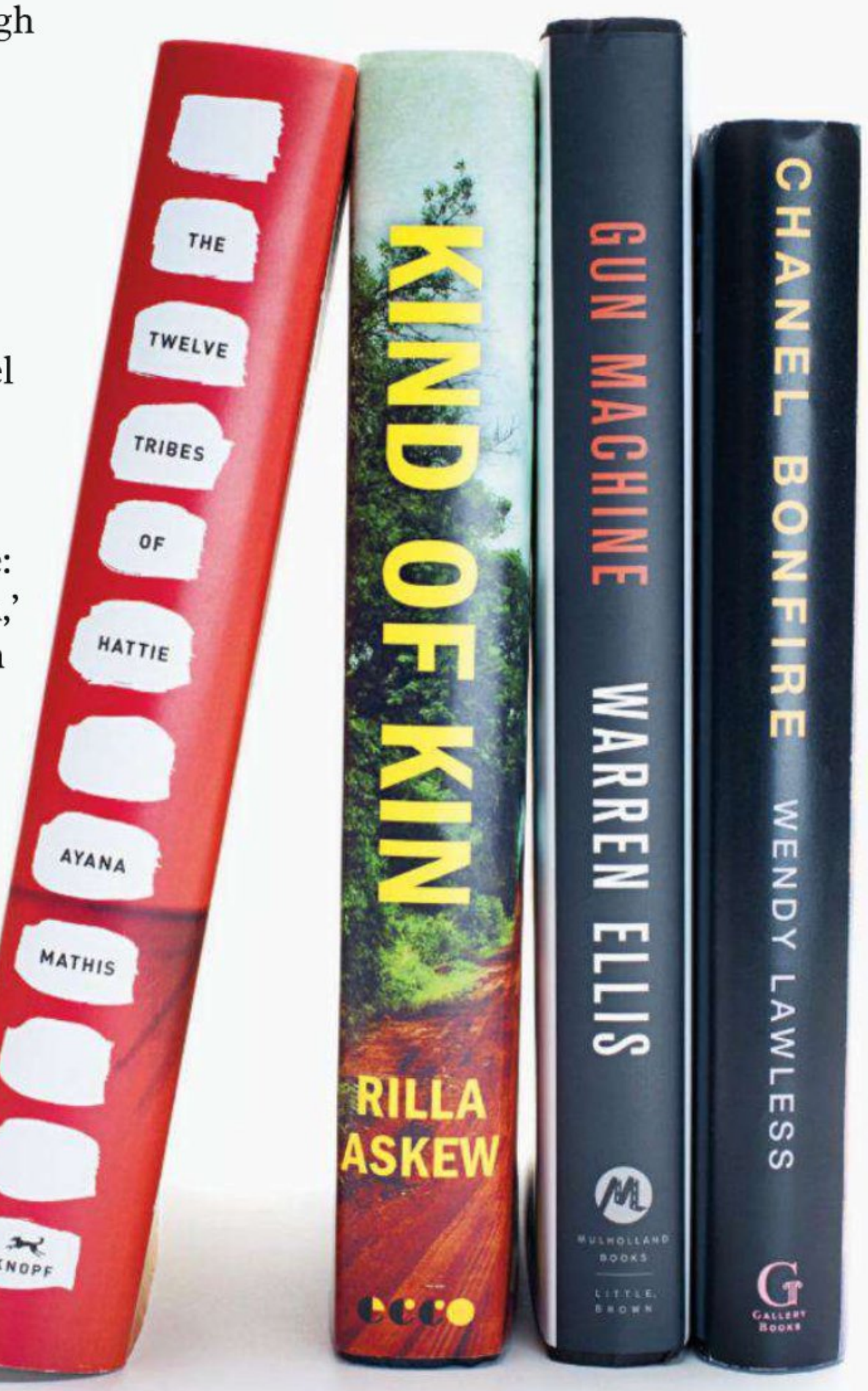
Gun Machine by Warren Ellis (Little, Brown, $25.99)

The author has a cult following for graphic novels—now he is gunning to keep you up all night with a creepy serial-killer thriller.

Chanel Bonfire

by Wendy Lawless (Gallery Books, $25)

Lawless's chronicles of life with her charming, wildly unstable mother could be bleak, but the author's wit, resilience, and compassion make her story illuminating and inspiring.



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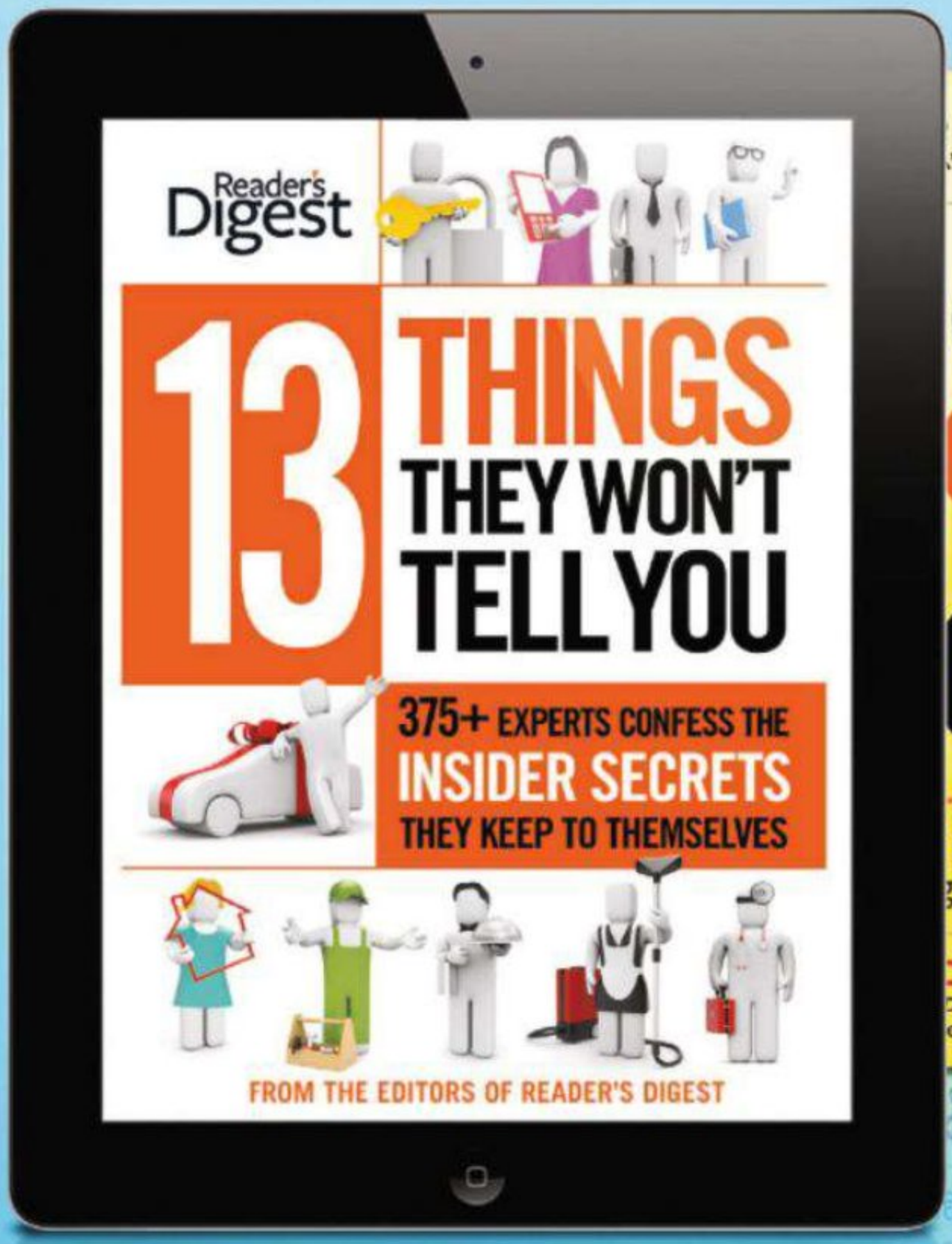
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It Pays to Increase Your Word Power

BY EMILY COX & HENRY RATHVON

To the Letter This month, we get down to the ABCs of words—the letters—with a quiz about their myriad faces, sounds, and symbols. **Answers on next page.**

1. serif ('ser-ef) *n.*—A: *X* to represent a kiss. B: lines at the ends of a letter. C: double letter.

2. zed ('zed) *n.*—A: dot over an *i*. B: British *Z*. C: underlined character.

3. cursive ('ker-siv) *adj.*—A: rounded, as *B* or *C*. B: in flowing penmanship. C: left-facing.

4. schwa ('shwah) *n.*—A: unstressed vowel. B: misspelled word. C: one-letter word.

5. aspirate ('as-peh-rayt) *v.*—A: end in *-ess*. B: start with an *A*. C: pronounce with an *H* sound.

6. majuscule ('ma-jes-kyewl) *n.*—A: italic letter. B: boldface letter. C: uppercase letter.

7. assonant ('a-suh-nunt) *adj.*—A: with the same vowel sound. B: using mixed fonts. C: hard to pronounce.

8. tilde ('til-duh) *n.*—A: squiggle over an *n*. B: two dots over an *o*. C: accent mark.

9. sigmoid ('sig-moyd) *adj.*—A: of an autograph. B: following a colon. C: shaped like an *S*.

10. decussate (de-'kuh-sayt) *v.*—A: slur. B: mispronounce. C: intersect, form an X.

11. logogram ('law-ge-gram) *n.*—A: picture writing. B: symbol standing for a word. C: set of initials.

12. burr ('ber) *n.*—A: rolled or trilled *r* sound. B: printing error. C: repeated vowel.

13. sibilant ('sih-bih-lent) *adj.*—A: similar in sound. B: in alphabetical order. C: having an *S* or hissing sound.

14. guttural ('guh-tuh-rel) *adj.*—A: from the throat. B: having a hard *G* sound. C: emphasized.

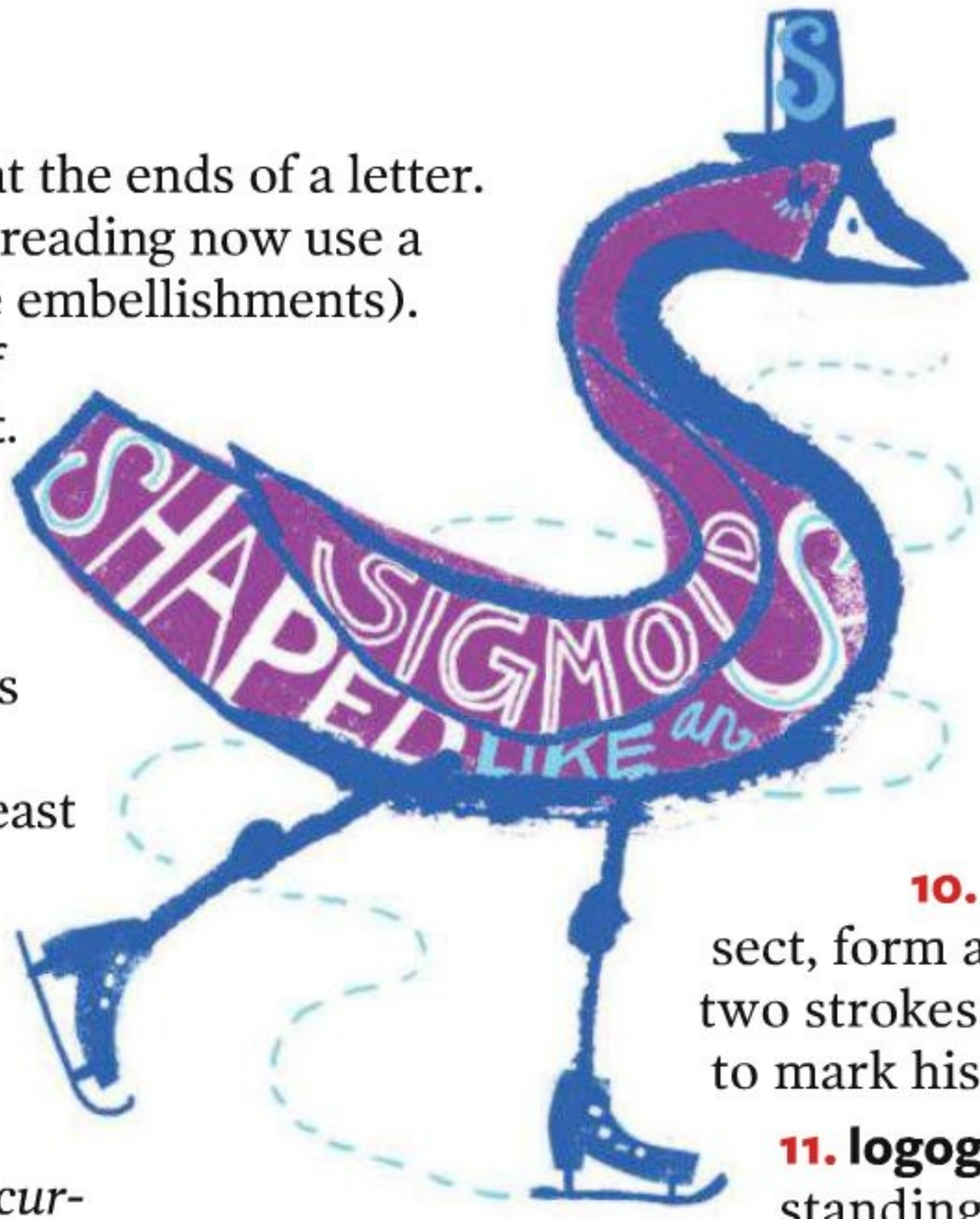
15. orthoepy ('or-theh-'weh-pee) *n.*—A: code. B: proper pronunciation. C: sign language.

WORD HISTORY: UPPERCASE

Uppercase (aka the capital letter) and sibling **lowercase** hark back to the 17th and 18th centuries, when typesetters kept physical capital letters (made of metal or wood) in an upper drawer of their desk and the junior-size companions in a lower drawer.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JILL CALDER

Answers



1. serif—*[B]* lines at the ends of a letter. The words you're reading now use a *serif* font (note the embellishments). These use a sans *serif* ("without serif") font.

2. zed—*[B]* British *Z*. Since returning from London, Zooey has spelled her name out loud to us at least three dozen times using a *zed*.

3. cursive—*[B]* in flowing penmanship. I had to admire the lovely *cursive* of Mary's "Dear John" letter.

4. schwa—*[A]* unstressed vowel. In case you're wondering, the *e* in *vowel* is a *schwa*.

5. aspirate—*[C]* pronounce with an *H* sound. Eliza Doolittle didn't *aspirate* when she spoke of "'Enry 'Iggins."

6. majuscule—*[C]* uppercase letter. Alex thinks he's so great, he signs his name in all *majuscules*.

7. assonant—*[A]* with the same vowel sound. The only thing Bob and Dot have in common is their names' *assonance*.

CONFUSED COUSINS

Here's a usage error that seems to be on the rise: ***regiment*** versus ***regimen***. Despite the close spellings, the meanings are clear. A regiment is a military unit; a regimen is a systematic plan to improve health or skills (a diet regimen, a research regimen, for instance). For more ways to sound smarter, see page 118.

8. tilde—*[A]* squiggle over an *n*. Nuñez barked when the maître d' forgot the *tilde* in his name.

9. sigmoid—*[C]* shaped like an *S*. I tried to skate a figure 8 but slipped and left a *sigmoid* trail instead.

10. decussate—*[C]* intersect, form an X. The pirate let two strokes *decussate* on the map to mark his hidden treasure.

11. logogram—*[B]* symbol standing for a word. The Artist Formerly Known as Prince used a fancy *logogram* instead of his actual name.

12. burr—*[A]* rolled or trilled *r* sound. When Scotty says "rump roast," the *burrs* are like a purring motor.

13. sibilant—*[C]* having an *S* or hissing sound. Certain *sibilant* sounds struck Sussman as excessively snaky.

14. guttural—*[A]* from the throat. To illustrate *guttural* consonants, Professor Fenn literally growled at his students.

15. orthoepy—*[B]* proper pronunciation. Tongue-twisters like "rubber baby buggie bumper" are good exercises in *orthoepy*.

VOCABULARY RATINGS

- **9 and below: C+**
- **10–12: B-**
- **13–15: A+**

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Life in These United States

When I took my ten-year-old grandson to his first flea market, I taught him the fine art of haggling.

"Say someone's selling a hunting knife for $20. Offer him $15," I instructed. He got the concept, and when he spotted a ring he wanted that was selling for $5, he went into action.

"I only have $3," he told the woman at the booth.

She smiled. "Then $3 it is."

With that, he pulled out a $5 bill and waited for change.

Cindy Coleman, Moscow, Pennsylvania

"My resolution! Oh please, resolutions are for those that need to be improved upon ..."

Movie Madness

Renting a movie? Don't Netflix anything until you've read these reviews from the Four Word Film Review (fwfr.com).

- *Titanic:* Icy dead people
- *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock:* Finding Nimoy
- *The Exorcist:* Room with a spew
- *The Pianist:* Schindler's Lizst
- *Super Size Me:* A month of sundaes

Scene: My recent elucidating phone conversation with a car-rental service.

Me: "Hello. I'm calling to see if I can rent a four-wheel-drive vehicle at the Albuquerque airport?"

Customer-service rep: "Yes, ma'am, all our vehicles have four wheels."

Beth Vachon, Louisville, Kentucky

SIGNS OF HUMOR

My husband and I love that nearly every flashing construction sign we pass has some sort of typo. Our favorite: "Caution! Loose Gravey Ahead!"

Terra Costin, Elk Ridge, Utah

ILLUSTRATION BY TERESA PARKHURST BURNS

A Real Page-Turner

Nothing beats a good book, except, possibly, these actual titles:

- *How to Avoid Huge Ships*
- *The Humanure Handbook*
- *What's Wrong with My Snake?*
- *Fancy Coffins to Make Yourself*
- *Knitting with Dog Hair*
- *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things*
- *Cheese Problems Solved*
- *Old Tractors, and the Men Who Love Them*
- *What's Your Poo Telling You?*

Source: stylist.co.uk

Being Korean, I asked my Tennessean friend, "What's the difference between whiskey and moonshine?"

His reply: "Tax."

Kisu Kim, Antioch, Tennessee

... And One from Abroad

My three-year-old daughter, Chantelle, begged me for a story about when she was born.

"Daddy brought Mommy to the hospital, and the doctor helped you to be born," I began. "When you came out, we both said, 'What is it?' And the doctor said, 'It's a girl!'"

"How did the doctor know I was a girl?" asked Chantelle.

"Well, when you were born, you came to us with no clothes on."

"Ahh," said Chantelle. "And boys have clothes on."

Annette Campbell, Calgary, Canada

Your favorite new joke, funny anecdote, or crazy news story might be worth $$$. See page 64 for details.

LOOK BEHIND YOU!

Ever have a picture ruined by some idiot in the background? **That's called a photobomb.** It's better than a real bomb, but not much. Here are some from *Photobombed,* by Beverly L. Jenkins (Sourcebooks):

Strokes are no laughing matter, girls.

Thomas the Tank Engine is not so sure about this guy.

The last photo of Maria before the freak toaster accident.

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Reader's Digest (ISSN 0034-0375) (USPS 865-820), Vol. 182, No. 1083, January 2013. © 2013. Published monthly (subject to change without notice) by The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 44 South Broadway, White Plains, New York 10601. Periodicals postage paid at White Plains, New York, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Reader's Digest, PO Box 6095, Harlan, Iowa 51593-1595.

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Please Recycle This Magazine

Quotable Quotes

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right.

Oprah Winfrey

Every moment wasted looking back keeps us from moving forward.

Hillary Clinton

Break as few bones as possible and make as much noise as you can.

Chevy Chase

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.

Sam Levenson, humorist

The world does not deliver meaning to you. You have to make it meaningful ... and decide what you want and need and must do.

Zadie Smith

All being finished means is that you haven't started yet.

Aaron Sorkin

You have to dream big, wish hard, and chase after your goals, because no one is going to do it for you.

Cee Lo Green

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

TOMORROW IS ...

... promised to no one.

Clint Eastwood

... the first, blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one.

Brad Paisley

... our permanent address.

E. E. Cummings

ILLUSTRATION BY KIRSTEN ULVE